

University of Alberta

*The Meeting Place at the Bend in the River:
An Examination of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground,
Edmonton, Alberta*

by

Pamela Marie Cunningham



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the

requirements for the degree of *Master of Arts*

Department of *Anthropology*

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 2006



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ISBN: 0-494-13729-0

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ISBN: 0-494-13729-0

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Abstract:

The Meeting Place at the Bend in the River: An Examination of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground, Edmonton, Alberta is the story of the official abandonment and eventual recognition and commemoration of one of the oldest cemeteries and Aboriginal burial grounds in Alberta. In use from the early 1800s until 1871 the cemetery and burial ground was eventually covered by a road and power plant. This thesis explores the notions of social memory and commemoration as expressed in an oral history project involving the descendant community of the cemetery and burial ground and its official commemoration.

Acknowledgements:

There are many people to thank and little space so here goes. Chris and Mike, thank you for being patient and for all the help along the way. Gail in the Anthropology office was always able to answer any questions or listen to venting – for that, many thanks. The faculty and staff at the School of Native Studies, as well as the many students I have had the enjoyment of interacting with, have given me a place to belong while on campus. I would also like to thank the EAUAC and the City of Edmonton for allowing me to work on this project. Thank you to all of the descendants, activists and writers I got to know through this project. The RFAOHP Contract Team (Jacqueline, Dianne, Melanie and Crystal) did an incredible job with the interviews under difficult circumstances - they deserve much respect and have my lasting gratitude.

I was fortunate during the course of this research project to receive a National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation internship at the Provincial Museum of Alberta where I got to spend four months conducting historical research that was beneficial to this research. Thank you also to the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation for their support of this research.

Without my fellow graduate students and friends this would never have been finished. Thank you for keeping a copy of this when I hit the delete key.

Finally, my family, although not entirely understanding what I was doing (questions varied from “what is anthropology?” to “you don’t play with bones, do you?”) did their best to understand why this was so important to me. Thank you.

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Introduction:

The Starting Point



Figure 1. Rossdale Road with Crosses (skyline view). Photo used with permission of Heather Zwicker.

I want to say place doesn't matter, but each story needs a place. An opening scene, a beginning, a starting point." (Miseck 2002:2)

Located on a bend on the North Saskatchewan River in central Edmonton, Alberta, the Rossdale Flats have seen Edmonton's history created and destroyed. The Rossdale Flats are the starting point of this story. Named after Donald Ross, a Scot who was the proprietor of Edmonton's first hotel that was located in the vicinity, the flats have been the location of Aboriginal camps long before the arrival of Europeans; fur

trading forts; roads; utility lines; Sun Dances; treaty payments; a racetrack and accompanying grandstand; the inauguration of Alberta as a province; a power plant and a historic cemetery and burial ground. With such a varied history, the Rossdale Flats have become a flash point in the relations between the City of Edmonton and some of its Aboriginal citizens. The story of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground on the Rossdale Flats is one of power, memory, and the people and organizations that create and use power and memory.

Incorporated on October 8, 1904, the City of Edmonton celebrated its centennial in 2004. Throughout the year numerous events were held reinforcing ideas of civic pride and nostalgia. This would have been an ideal time to finally honour the many people who are buried in Edmonton's "forgotten" cemeteries. Yet, for the most part, there was little discussion pertaining to these burial grounds. There were individual celebrations, memorials if you will, but the oldest cemeteries in Edmonton continued to lie under roads, power plants, and colleges.

The story here is the story of one of those cemeteries – the old Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground located on the Rossdale Flats. It is not a comprehensive story; with such a complex history a "true" or singular account cannot be given since it does not exist. As much as I would like it to be, this is not the entire story of Edmonton's disregard for its history. For decades, development has continued unchecked in this northern city. Every spring bulldozers knock down the few remnants of urban forests which exist outside of the river valley which itself has long been touted as the largest urban parkland in North America. In 1999, Little Mountain, one of Edmonton's last remnants of prairie parkland was bulldozed to make room for a new

housing development (Phair 2000). The Tegler Building, a retail and office building built in 1911, in downtown Edmonton was razed in 1982 despite considerable opposition to make way for Hop's, a two-story handbag store. In the lobby for the handbag store, which closed within three years of opening, there is a memorial plaque to the old building that once stood there (Herzog 2000). There are many more examples of this kind of blatant rejection of our city's rich and vibrant history; far too many to discuss within the confines of this thesis.

In *The Imaginative Structure of the City*, sociologist Alan Blum in the discussion of the fate of a city's architecture indicates that there are three types of intervention which occur in the "conflict between old and new" (2003:244). The first is replacement which "destroys the link of site to action by substituting a new kind for the old in a relation between two artifacts different in kind" (2003:248-249); upgrading "redefines the site in a way that preserves its link to the action, but in a modified form that could redefine the nature of the activity" (2003:249); and displacement "removes the site and action to a new space" (2003:249). While Blum is discussing architecture, his ideas are clearly applicable beyond the realm of architecture. The history of colonization clearly emulates this pattern of replacement, upgrading and displacement. In Edmonton this displacement is most clearly illustrated in the example of the Papaschasse Band, Indian Reserve No. 136.

During the late 1800s, the only newspaper in Edmonton was the *Edmonton Bulletin* founded by Frank Oliver¹. Born in Ontario, Oliver moved to Edmonton in 1876

¹ A full discussion of Frank Oliver is beyond the confines of this thesis. Oliver was eventually elected to the Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories, a Member of Parliament and was made a cabinet minister – the Minister of the Interior. It is estimated that under Oliver's command, almost 21% of reserve land in the prairies was surrendered back to the federal Crown (Martin-McGuire 1998).

and founded the Bulletin a few years later. Oliver had a special fury and indignation for the Indians and Métis who lived in the Edmonton area. His attention was primarily directed at the Papaschasse² band and in a January 17, 1881 editorial in the Edmonton Bulletin, Oliver writes

If this country was given by the Indians to the Government then it would be right for the Government to be thankful for whatever they might get, but if the Government has bought the land, it is surely their right and duty to look after the interests of the settlers...If the Indians take the reserve as at present surveyed a lasting injury will be done to this settlement, without a corresponding benefit accruing to them. Now is the time for the Government to declare the reserve open and show whether this country is to be run in the interests of the settlers or the Indians (Edmonton Bulletin January 17, 1881).

Oliver's influence cannot be underestimated. Over a period of years he advocated for the dissolution of the Papasschase band, a dissolution which occurred in 1887. A number of the people interred in the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground are members of the Papasschase band – their dissolution led to a majority of the members taking Halfbreed³ scrip and others were sent to other bands. This removal is a major contributing factor to the *displacement* of the cemetery site within Edmonton's corporate memory. As this example shows, physical displacement of a population is not enough to remove the memory or connection to a site; it is necessary to displace the psychological and historical connection the replaced population has to a space. Paradoxically, it is this

² There are a number of ways to spell Papaschasse including Passpasschase, Papasschase. The spelling here is the one that will be used throughout this document. For a discussion of Papaschase history please see Dwayne Trevor Donald's "Edmonton Pentimento: Re-Reading History in the Case of the Papaschase Cree", in *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 2004, Pages 21-53. See also Kenneth James Tyler's *A tax-eating proposition: the history of the Passpasschase Indian Reserve*, unpublished MA thesis, 1979.

³ The word Halfbreed is used here as it is historically accurate – there was no Métis scrip only Halfbreed scrip. Additionally it can be argued that many Papasschase descendants took scrip before the dissolution of their band, in effect causing their band to be dissolved. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to review the particulars of the Papasschase Band and their current claim. Interested readers are directed to the material cited in footnote 2 above.

displacement from the space that may have given the burials on the Rosedale Flats an elevated status in the lives of descendants. To many descendants, Elders and community members, the burials became a symbol of the disregard that various levels of government and settler populations had shown to Canada's Aboriginal peoples. In a way the burials reflected the *displacement* experienced by Aboriginal peoples through the process of colonization.

Edmonton's Aboriginal Population

Who are Edmonton's Aboriginal citizens? It is hard to be precise about the number of Aboriginal people who live in Edmonton⁴. The most recent data available is extracted from the 2001 Census, which reflects Edmonton's total population as 937,845 with the Aboriginal population numbering 40,930 (Canada 2001: available online at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/home/index.cfm>). The majority of the Aboriginal population in Edmonton is Métis, followed by Status Indians and Inuit. Interestingly, there are a number of people who identify themselves as Aboriginal of multiple origins perhaps reflecting the artificial nature of the divisions between Aboriginal peoples created through Canada's Indian and Aboriginal policy.

In a 2001 report for the Canada West Foundation, policy analyst Calvin Hanselmann mentions the mobility of Aboriginal people not only between reserves and cities but also between cities themselves; there is not however a discussion of why this mobility occurs. In a 2003 follow-up to the initial report, Hanselmann further acknowledges the mobility of Canada's Aboriginal people and in acknowledgement of the social issues facing many urban Aboriginal people notes:

⁴ Within this thesis, the term Aboriginal is used to refer to Indians, Inuit and Métis as reflected in Sec. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

Although the transition from rural and reserve areas to a major city can be much like immigrating to Canada from another country, the Government of Canada does not fund urban transition programs for Aboriginal people nearly to the extent that it funds transition programs for recent immigrants to Canada. Urban Aboriginal transition programming receives less than five cents for every dollar spent on immigrant settlement and transition.

(5)



Figure 2. Exhibition grounds on the Rossdale Flats - 1905. Notice the grove of trees and the Aboriginal encampment in the background. Photo Courtesy of the City of Edmonton Archives. CEA 10-2375.

In their 2004 article, "Government policy and the spatial redistribution of Canada's Aboriginal peoples," James Frideres and Madeline and Warren Kalbach⁵ trace the historical migration patterns of Aboriginal people using the national censuses that, in some cases, were collected even prior to confederation in 1867. According to the

⁵ While the article by Frideres and the Kalbachs is informative in illustrating the factors affecting Aboriginal rural-urban migration and is, in fact, one of the few published pieces to do so, they do make a glaring error in their discussion of the formation of Métis settlements (page 101). Using Olive Dickason's 1999 entry on the Métis for the *Encyclopedia of Canadian Peoples*, Frideres and the Kalbachs write that the 1938 Métis Betterment Act was passed by the Canadian government and led to the creation of formalized Métis settlements in Alberta and British Columbia. This is incorrect. The 1938 Métis Betterment Act was passed by the government of the Province of Alberta in 1938 and led to the creation of twelve Métis settlements, of which eight remain: Buffalo Lake; East Prairie; Elizabeth; Fishing Lake; Gift Lake; Kikino; Paddle Prairie; Peavine (Big Prairie). There are no formally legislated Métis settlements outside of Alberta.

Frideres and the Kalbachs in 1961, "only 13 percent of the Aboriginal population resided in urban areas" (2004:104) yet over the following decade there was a "138 per cent increase [in urbanization] for the Aboriginal population" (2004:104). These numbers continued to climb and the 1981 census reflected that 42% of Aboriginal people in Canada were urban based. Frideres and the Kalbachs assert that a federal policy termed democratization which "allowed Indians to more fully participate in mainstream social and political institutions" (2004:105) is one of the factors that attributed to the influx of Aboriginal people to urban centres. They list many more factors including access to schools (secondary and post-secondary), "the construction of all-weather roads" (Frideres et al. 2004:106), the removal of travel restrictions and the lack of reserve housing. However, in their final analysis, Frideres and the Kalbachs note "though still considerably less urbanized than the rest of the Canadian population, Aboriginal people are more mobile than the general population, but not substantially so" (2004:111) and further "the majority of Aboriginal movers, as with non-Aboriginal movers, change residence locally" (2004:111).

A note about proper names, place names and terms

There are a number of things working on the Rosedale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project has taught me or solidified for me. Most notably, the importance of words. Earlier in this thesis – the first page to be precise – and throughout, I run the risk of offending people by the words I choose to use. Some community members, activists and Elders alike, dislike the land in question referred to as the "Rosedale Flats" due to the dubious nature of the hotel that existed there.

Many of the Elders, community members and activists refer to the site as “the meeting place in the bend in the river” – a name that acknowledges the history of the site and its social importance. In their discussion on the Island Cache, a predominantly Aboriginal residential area of Prince George, British Columbia that was systematically dismantled through municipal intervention, Mike Evans and Lisa Krebs, et al. note

Not only was the Island Cache removed, it has been erased from the history created by street signs, and replaced with the much earlier, and more westerly, image of Foley [CNR] and his railway. The Island Cache is not just gone – it has been replaced. No matter, people can still remember (2004:139).

After trying many different ways to describe the site, I have decided that for the sake of clarity and understanding, I will use the term “Rossdale Flats” when needed – the term is used in the various archaeological reports, newspaper articles and media reports and this is how they are widely known.

I have also chosen to refer to the burial site itself as ‘the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground’. While it is cumbersome, it is necessary. Calling the site one or the other is incorrect – it is both a fort cemetery *and* a burial ground. Cemeteries and burial grounds are different psychological entities – one provides a vision of an ordered place with markers following row upon row. The other is more colloquial, spontaneous and friendly; the kind of place you would see rabbits, hares and mice running through the tangles of brush. Julie Rugg, Director of the Cemetery Research Group at York University in England, provides the following definitions: “cemeteries [are]...specifically demarcated sites of burial with internal layout that is sufficiently well ordered....[they] are principally secular institutions that aim to serve the whole community” (2000:264). In contrast, Rugg notes that a burial ground “is used to

distinguish a particular type of burial space, the key characteristic of which hinges on the identity of the bereaved" (2000:266). Although her work deals with historic cemeteries in England, there are many parallels to the situation at Rossdale: "the [burial] ground may only be regarded as sacred by the minority community, and can be vulnerable to destruction" (Rugg 2000:267). As will be shown in chapters two and three, the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground is considered sacred by many descendants of those buried there. It has, however, been extremely vulnerable to industrial and transportation development.

The Rossdale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project

The Rossdale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project (RFAOHP) has its genesis in a letter written by then Minister of Community Development (Alberta) Gene Zwozdesky to Edmonton's then mayor Bill Smith. In this letter, dated August 24, 2001, Zwozdesky urged the Mayor and the City of Edmonton to undertake an oral history project relating to the cemetery and burial ground on the Rossdale Flats. Over a year later, the RFAOHP began as a project sponsored by the Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (EAUAC), an advisory body functioning under the City's Community Services Department. At that time, I served as a member-at-large of EAUAC, and as a descendant of people buried on the Flats with a knowledge of conducting both historical and ethnographic research, I was asked by one of the Elders affiliated with EAUAC as well as the chair of EAUAC to assume the responsibilities of managing the project⁶.

From September 2002 until March 2003, administrative work needed to begin the project was completed. Funding was secured, a project Terms of Reference was

⁶ A more detailed analysis of the RFAOHP is provided in Chapter Three of this thesis.

developed, the approval of the City's legal department was obtained and a contractor and adjacent team were hired and began work in June 2003. Over the following six months, interviews were conducted with 28 members of the descendant communities affiliated with the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground. The final report of the project was submitted to EAUAC and the Community Services Department in January 2004. While the formal part of the RFAOHP may have concluded, my involvement in the ongoing conflict at Rosedale did not end with the submission of the report. Although I no longer had an "official" role to play, I was still (and continue to be) contacted by Elders and other community members over matters pertaining to that site and other historic cemeteries and burial grounds in and around the Edmonton area. The boundaries of the official commemorative site were set before the RFAOHP concluded and the results of the final report did not change those boundaries. Yet the RFAOHP was not without its successes. It served as a catalyst in making the City of Edmonton aware of a substantial portion of its history that for decades it had ignored and it also functioned as a way for the voices of the descendant communities⁷ of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground to be heard.

The format of the thesis

Within this thesis, I will explore the role of social memory and its expressive form – commemoration – as well as the history and continued importance of the cemetery and burial ground. It is my assertion that the RFAOHP can in itself be considered a form of commemoration. Commemoration is the public formal expression

⁷ A formal definition of descendant community is provided later in this thesis (page 56). To this author, a descendant community exists when individuals believe themselves to be descendants affected by a particular situation – the individuals in question do not have to have a biological connection to the site but a psychological or spiritual connection is necessary.

of social memory and while it normally takes a solemn memorial route the form that commemoration takes is not dictated. It is mutable and adaptable to the needs of the participants. *Chapter One: Social Memory and Commemoration* concerns itself with defining what constitutes sacredness and the role which social memory and commemoration plays in its definition. In *Chapter Two: The Meeting Place at the Bend in the River* the history of the site is explored with particular attention to one of the people who was buried on the flats. *Chapter Three: The Rosedale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project* is the recounting of an oral histories project which I managed on behalf of the City of Edmonton. It is a chapter which condenses the over 200-year history of the site into a small number of pages. There are, admittedly, omissions. The majority of the pages devoted to the burials at Rosedale are of an archaeological or environmental assessment/historical assessment nature. If the people who are buried on the site are provided with names it is primarily through the dry facts of their death, who was present when they were buried and the like – we rarely have the chance to find out much about the people who lie under the ground in that sacred location.

In *Chapter Four: Bringing the Pieces Together* I explore the notions of insider status as both a benefit and barrier to conducting research in your own community. The Rosedale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project will also be reviewed as a form of commemoration. Finally, the thesis concludes with an account of the reburial ceremony which took place on August 28, 2005. As will become apparent Blum's typology of replacement, upgrading and displacement is applicable in the conflict on the Rosedale Flats. However is displacement necessarily the end of the process? Could it not be argued that this instance of reburial and the instances of repatriation and reburial taking

place throughout the America's, are in fact a form of a replacement – an idea of completing the circle?

Chapter One:

Social Memory and Commemoration

A curious thing happened in Edmonton, Alberta newspapers in the late 1990s – there appeared a number of articles referring to the mysterious existence of a cemetery on the Rosedale Flats. Within the headlines and stories of the papers, the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground was referred to as abandoned, forgotten and, conversely, it had been found, revealed or discovered. While this journalistic trope may attract readers, a review of various Edmonton newspapers shows that the site had not been forgotten by the descendants of those who are buried there or by municipal workers who, for over half a century, have uncovered the graves in the course of their duties. The old cemetery and burial ground has, however, been neglected and forgotten by the municipal government and the utility company which now occupies the site. In his study of urban locales, geographer Alex Marshall writes “creating places is almost wholly a product of public, political, and taxpayer-financed decisions” (2000:210). It’s a statement whose simplicity is sometimes overlooked – of course, the creation of places relies on taxpayer-financed decisions. The question becomes: is the reverse of this also true? Is the creation of non-spaces, places where the historic meaning and community connection has been removed, also the creation of those decisions? As we will see the site was never forgotten or abandoned and was therefore never found, revealed or discovered. In this section the role of memory, social memory to be precise, in the subsequent recognition and future commemoration of the site will be examined.

Social Memory and Commemoration

Memory as a theoretical concept is often referred to, yet poorly understood.

People remember events which happened yesterday or last week; more accurately they remember their version of what happened yesterday or last week. In the introduction to the book *Social Memory* (Fentress and Wickham 1992), R.I. Moore notes

individual memory is not simply personal: the memories which constitute our identity and provide the context for every thought and action are not only our own, but are learned, borrowed, and inherited -- in part, and part of, a common stock, constructed, sustained, and transmitted by the families, communities, and cultures to which we belong (1992: viii).

Memory is not self-contained - it is acquired and framed as part of the socialization process an individual undergoes as a member of a particular group. We remember certain events, the people and actions involved in a certain way because we have been conditioned to do so. Fentress and Wickham go on to state "we can usually regard social memory as an expression of collective experience: social memory identifies a group, giving it a sense of its past and defining its aspirations for the future" (1992:25).

A review of the literature on social memory reveals that the forerunner of the current approaches is French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs who perished in a concentration camp during World War II. He wrote a number of books and articles on social memory - the most relevant to this discussion is entitled *On Collective Memory*, originally published in French in 1950 and in English in 1980. Halbwachs believes that "the past is a social construction...shaped by the concerns of the present" (1992:25) and he is concerned, in particular, with the role of family in the creation of memories:

Family recollections in fact develop as in so many different soils, in the consciousness of various members of the domestic group. Even when they live near each other, but all the more so when life keeps them distant, each family member recollects in his own manner the common familial past (Halbwachs 1992:54).

Yet, if Halbwachs is right what does it mean if the knowledge, the information, is not passed on within families? Within the case study included here it becomes apparent that in some families the knowledge of the burials was passed on, yet in many others it was only retained within a few individuals and then lost with their passing. Thus memory is shaped by numerous factors and maybe rekindled or extinguished.

Michel Foucault refers to subjugated knowledge as the "forms of knowledge or experience that "have been disqualified as inadequate to their task, or insufficiently elaborated" (Foucault as quoted in Sawicki 1991:26). It can be claimed that the knowledge of the burials on the Rosedale Flats was a form of this subjugated knowledge that Foucault addresses. The knowledge was there – it was retained within the descendant community yet the knowledge was not given credence and the descendants were not given the power to affect what was happening to the site. Foucault also discusses popular knowledge which he defines as "a particular, local, regional knowledge, a *differential* knowledge incapable of unanimity" (1991:26; emphasis in original). What was the popular knowledge of the burials on the flats? If we are using the media as our guide, it is easily ascertained that the popular knowledge of the site was that it was abandoned and forgotten, left to wither away until the industrial development took over the site in the late 1890s. Yet the oral history of the descendant community does continue to retain knowledge. In *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton observes that "the oral history of subordinate groups will produce another type of

history: one in which not only will most of the details be different, but in which the very construction of meaningful shapes will obey a different principle" (1989:19). That is why it was essential that the oral histories of the varied descendant communities be acknowledged, heard, recorded and provided to the City of Edmonton in a form they are familiar with – a contractor's report. Connerton also discusses three types of memory: personal; cognitive and what he terms physical or body memory – "how to read or how to write" (1989:22). Personal memory is, obviously, related to an individual's personal past; cognitive memory refers to "the person who remembers that thing must have met, experienced or learned of it in the past" (Connerton 1989). For Connerton, memory is also located within the group – the group influences how and what you remember and the weighting you provide to specific memories.

In his book *Lost Time: Remembering and Forgetting in Late Modern Culture*, David Gross notes "when something is retained over time, there is usually a good reason for it; the retention is not accidental, but purposeful, intentional, and institutionally supported" (2000:77). Similarly to Halbwachs and Connerton, Gross also stresses the importance of the family and notes that

for family memories to endure and take on meaning, they must be repeatedly and actively reinforced with *continuous interaction between an older generation that wishes to transmit memories and a younger one that is present and willing to receive them*. This kind of family interaction in turn assumes some amount of rootedness in one place and reasonably frequent contact among family members so that the family has the opportunity to recall together important as well as trivial matters...if the conditions that encourage this kind of collective reminiscence are absent, it becomes very difficult for memories to take hold at all, let alone be passed on from one generation to the next (2000:112; emphasis added).

Gross presupposes that there must be a reciprocal relationship between the generations in order for knowledge to be transmitted and further that a fixed place is required. These are important conditions on memory for the study I present here. I have indicated in the introduction to this thesis that the Aboriginal population of Edmonton is particularly fluid. People come and go from reserve or other rural area to the urban centre. Amplify this over the 134 years since the last known burial took place⁸ on the flats and a picture of how some people in positions of authority or control may believe the transfer of knowledge was affected, corrupted even, emerges. The popular knowledge of the site is rooted in stories of abandonment, and what Gross terms oppositional memory which involves remembering and recalling differently is, as he terms it, "no easy task" (2000:134). The political position of Aboriginal people in Canada in the mid-1990s or today is radically different than it was in the early 1900s when the first disturbance occurred or in the 1930s when Rosedale Road was placed on top of a portion of the cemetery. The knowledge didn't go away; it was not forgotten, rather it was sublimated and marginalized and held onto until the time was appropriate, for it to re-emerge.

John R. Gillis identifies two types of memory as well: popular memory and elite memory. According to Gillis, elite memory is the

attempt to create a consecutive account of all that [has]...happened from a particular point in the past...[while]...popular memory ma[kes] no effort to fill in all the blanks. If elite time marched in a more or less linear manner, popular time danced and leaped. Elite time colonized and helped construct the boundaries of territories that we have come to call nations (1991:6).

⁸ See Appendix A: Abridged Timeline of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground for key events in the history of the site. Not all burials are indicated on this timeline.

The elite memory within the City of Edmonton is, of course, the corporate municipal memory that it has created as an institution. This memory is easy to find. It is primarily located within the City of Edmonton Archives in the Prince of Wales Armoury building. Archives by their nature are the repository of elite memory – few members of the public leave behind papers, documents or other material that are accessioned within an archive.

Peter Burke in "Memory as Social History" asks the reader "why do myths attach themselves to some individuals (living or dead) and not to others" (1989:104). That is, what makes some people, places or stories more readily adaptable to a myth legend than others? Within Alberta there are numerous unprotected and unregistered gravesites, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. What made this site grab the attention of not only descendants but also people with no connection to the site? Is it simply a matter of "us" vs. "them"? A matter of willful forgetfulness or simply a matter of not knowing better and proceeding with what the municipality believed was in the best interest of a larger proportion of its citizenry? It is more complex than that. Gillis writes that "temporal and geographic memory sites emerge at those times and in those places where there is a perceived or constructed break with the past" (1991:8). This is one of those sites – the constructed break with the historic site is clear, buildings, roads and fences obscure it. Burke notes that the "the social organization of forgetting, the rules of exclusion, suppression or repression, and the question of who wants who to forget what, and why" (1989:108) is key to the idea of memory. These qualities of memory are central to the discussion of the cemetery and burial ground on the Rosedale Flats and serves to influence much of the material in the following chapters.

Commemoration is the expression or performance of social memory (Connerton 1989; Frijda 1997; Schwartz 1982; Casey 2000). Specifically, philosopher Edward S. Casey defines commemoration as "communal...[and]...intensified remembering" (2000:217) and he notes that "in acts of commemoration remembering is intensified by taking place through the interposed agency of a text...and in the setting of a social ritual" (2000:218). Commemoration can take many forms yet at its core it must involve a group.

In his book *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* Casey explains that commemoration often involves some sort of ritual and ritual itself contains four formal features. The first is that ritual must contain "an act of reflection or an occasion for such an act" (2000:223). It must be part of an on-going cycle such as Remembrance Day services or lend itself to the creation of such a cycle. Secondly, ritual must have "an allusion to the commemorated event or person" (2000:223); for instance, a funeral ritual is full of allusions to the deceased and their life and the place they held in the lives of those commemorating them. Thirdly, ritual requires "bodily action" (2000:223); the participant must be there, they cannot teleconference in their participation. Finally, ritual must have "collective participation in the ritualistic action" (2000:223). Commemoration does not occur on an individual solitary basis – it by definition requires the group.

The form commemoration takes does not matter although it often takes a physical form via monuments, building naming ceremonies, portraits and other such physical manifestations. Yet commemoration can also involve less physical forms such as ritualized group prayer or other remembrances. Frijda asks "what determines the commemoration device [?]...power politics, propaganda, and access to the media may

play vital roles" (1997:126). The commemoration device is determined by all of those things that Frijda mentions. The act of commemorating is a political act; by choosing to commemorate the site of a past wrong, is to some extent, acknowledging the wrong. Frijda notes that within commemoration "there exist[s] motivations more distinctly relevant to the present" (1997:124) than to the past. The commemorative event is a ritual enacted for those present today. It is a time for us to remember those who have been lost through our actions.

Barry Schwartz writes that "recollection of the past is an active, constructive process...to remember is to place a part of the past in the service of the conceptions and needs of the present" (1982:374). Schwartz also indicates in order to preserve our memory of the past we partake in chronicling, "the direct recording of events and their sequence" (1982:377) and he notes that "commemoration lifts from an ordinary historical sequence those historical events which embody our deepest and most fundamental values. Commemoration...is in this sense a register of sacred history" (ibid). The selection of a commemorative event is not random, nor is it pre-determined. Selection of a commemorative event is calculated to include those events in the shared history of a group which mark rites of passage that the group has experienced (i.e., war). What is often chosen to be commemorated is something deemed sacred by those participating or organizing the commemorative activity. Commemoration can take many forms yet at its core the commemorative event must include a common goal. Within this research project, commemoration took the form of an oral history project that served not only to record the knowledge that Elders and community members had of the burials on the Rosedale Flats but also to acknowledge and, in fact, commemorate their experiences.

The RFAOHP as a commemorative experience is discussed more fully in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Ideas of the Sacred

The word sacred, like memory, is often over-used and poorly understood. There is not one definition of sacred that all scholars agree on. In "Sacred beliefs and beliefs of sacredness," from *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*, Jane Hubert observes that

the concept of sacred implies restrictions and prohibitions on human behaviour – if something is sacred then certain rules must be observed in relation to it, and this generally means that something that is said to be sacred, whether it be an object or site (or person), must be placed apart from everyday things or places, so that its special significance can be recognized, and rules regarding it obeyed (1997:11).

In Alberta, cemeteries are protected under *The Cemeteries Act, 2000*. The provincial cemeteries act defines a cemetery as "land that is set apart or used as a place for the burial of dead human bodies or other human remains or in which dead human bodies or other human remains are buried" (Alberta 2000. Available online at http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca/documents/Acts/C03.cfm?frm_isbn=077973890X. Accessed September 13, 2005). Cemeteries are registered entities and may only be established by a religious society or municipality. There is no provision for cemeteries that are considered unregistered, including Aboriginal burial grounds that were not legally created cemeteries⁹.

The issue of the integrity of Aboriginal gravesites and human remains is controversial. Throughout Canada and the United States there are numerous examples of

⁹ In contrast, Section 71(4) of the revised Cemeteries Act in Ontario (1990) provides a definition for an "unapproved aboriginal peoples cemetery" in addition to a cemetery. An unapproved aboriginal peoples cemetery is defined as "land set aside with the apparent intention of interring therein, in accordance, with cultural affinities, human remains and containing remains identified as those of persons who were one of the aboriginal peoples of Canada" (as quoted in Ross 2005:196).

graves which have been disturbed and the remains studied. In her book on the Sinixt, an "extinct" First Nation with ancestral territory on the Arrow Lakes, anthropologist Paula Pryce tells us that "remembered places become imbued with cultural power that might not be so potent if the integrity of those places were unthreatened" (1999:92); that is, the site acquires power, strength, perhaps even sacredness through its precarious existence. The Sinixt have been declared extinct in Canada only. The band had migrated south due to many pressures (including epidemics). The last member of the Sinixt band in Canada died in the 1950s, and therefore under the Indian Act, the band no longer existed. For years they have been trying to reclaim their traditional territory which includes a burial ground which had been sold to a local Doukhobor colony¹⁰. Thus the 'sacred' nature of the burial ground is inseparable from the historical relations between powerful and subjugated groups.

Since the implementation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 1990 (NAGPRA) in the United States, there have been numerous requests for the repatriation and reburial of human remains held by various institutions. In her discussion of the reburial at Arrow Lakes, Pryce observes that "reburial deliberately asserts their [the Sinixt] presence in this territory despite the dominant society's view that they do not belong there" (1999:140). In Canada, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996 "has stated that sacred objects and human remains should be repatriated...to the nation to which they belong" (Blair 2005:2). At the federal level the Cultural Property Export and Import Act 1985 provides a mechanism for First Nations to recover material which has been removed. In Alberta, both the Blackfoot First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Regulation

¹⁰ For a full discussion of the Sinixt see Pryce (1999)

(2004) and the First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act (2000) provide for repatriation of objects but neither statute covers the repatriation of human remains.

Jane Hubert writes

it may be that [with] some urbanized groups who have lost their link with their original homeland anything connected with the traditional past has become 'sacred' to them; others may use the word deliberately, because of its power as a deterrent to those who wish to destroy the land (1997:17).

Perhaps Hubert is right and the place is further imbued with sacredness when threatened.

The idea of a sacred site is perhaps essential to commemoration. As has been shown, commemoration is by nature a group activity and a group activity needs a location in order to be expressed. However a question emerges: does the group activity need to be performed by the group at the same time or can it be a group activity that takes place over a period of time? A group activity that has, at its root, a common goal of collecting and preserving the memories relating to a threatened and sacred site is considered commemoration. In the next chapter, 'The Meeting Place at the Bend in the River', I will explore one such site as it exists in the middle of Edmonton, Alberta.

Chapter Two:

*The Meeting Place at the Bend in the River*¹¹



Figure 3. Cree Camp on the Rossdale Flats. Photo courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Photo No. PAA B-6648. The white x located below the big house on the hill is in the original.

On July 8, 2004, City of Edmonton Streets and Transportation workers arrived at a small yet busy road junction in Edmonton's river valley. They placed barricades and signs on the far eastern lane that snakes past the EPCOR power plant causing traffic to detour approximately 100 feet north before making a hard right turn. With those barricades came the City of Edmonton's first physical recognition of the existence of a fur trade cemetery and Aboriginal burial ground in the centre of the city. The barricades marked the end of one story, the beginning of another and the mid-point of another. The closure of this small portion of Rossdale Road was a significant event. The continuing

¹¹ A version of this chapter was published as "Edmonton's Forgotten Cemetery" in *Edmonton on Location: River City Chronicles* edited by Heather Zwicker. Edmonton: NeWest Press. 2005.

dialogue between the City of Edmonton, descendants and community activists over the conflict in Rosedale is complex and requires that the relationship between the City of Edmonton and its history be examined in detail. The story of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground on the Rosedale Flats is also about the conflict of memory and its use by two very different parties - the City on one hand and the descendants on the other.

The meeting place at the bend in the river

In their 2003 report on the site, *Fort Edmonton Burial Ground: An Archaeological and Historical Study*, Calgary-based archaeology firm Lifeways of Canada Ltd., noted the presence of archaeological material dating back 8000 years. This material, consisting of what was determined to be a bison bone showing evidence of butchering, indicates that the site on the Rosedale Flats has one of the longest human occupations or utilizations anywhere in what is now known as Alberta. Further evidence shows the site's occupation, while not continuous, occurred consistently for thousands of years before a quasi-permanent settlement was established.

It surprises many people to learn that Fort Edmonton as it currently exists in Edmonton's river valley off of Fox Drive is not the "real" Fort Edmonton. The structure that attracts thousands of visitors each year, including numerous school outings, is a replica based on an 1846 painting by Paul Kane, an artist widely noted for his works and the embellishments they contain. Fort Edmonton Park is also not located anywhere near the site of the original Fort Edmonton. In its various incarnations, Fort Edmonton (the real working fort) had at least five different sites (see Map 1 below) in and around the

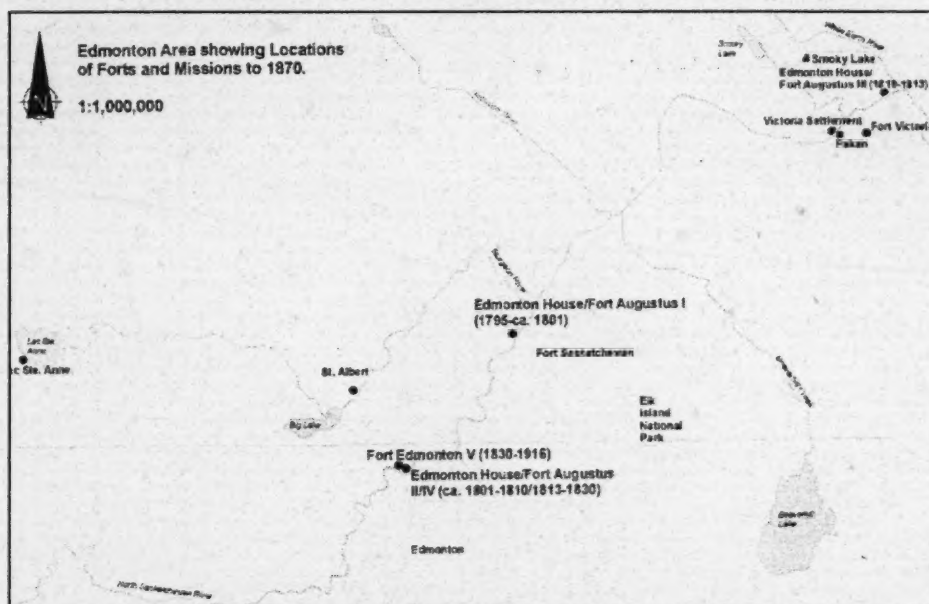
Edmonton area¹². The first location, or Edmonton House I, opened near Fort Saskatchewan at the confluence of the Sturgeon and North Saskatchewan Rivers in 1795. Edmonton House was built by the Hudson's Bay Company at this location to compete with the North West Company, a trading consortium based out of Montreal, which was building Fort Augustus in the vicinity. This competition between the rival companies continued and in approximately 1802¹³, the two companies uprooted themselves and built Fort Augustus II and Edmonton House II on the Rossdale Flats. Here, the companies remained until 1810 when they moved onto the White Earth Creek near present-day Smoky Lake, Alberta where the creek joins the North Saskatchewan. The two companies had a brief tenure on White Earth Creek, returning to the Rossdale Flats during the winter of 1812-1813. This would serve as the home of the two forts until the merger of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821; the final move for the re-christened Fort Edmonton (now Edmonton V) was in 1830 to the higher ground now occupied by the provincial legislature grounds.

A review of the extant historical records indicates that the first mention of a possible burial on the Rossdale Flats occurs on March 27, 1814. The Edmonton House Post Journal for this date records the following: "A Free Canadian arrived at our Neighbours [the North West Company's Fort Augustus IV] bringing with him the dead

¹² Presented here is a brief outline of the locations of the fort. For a detailed analysis of the relocations and reasons why, please see the Lifeways of Canada report of 2003 mentioned above; also of interest is the Commonwealth Historic Resources Management report of 2004. The appendix of Sir George Simpson's Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department 1820 and 1821 also contains a descriptor of the incarnations of Fort Edmonton on pages 415 and 416.

¹³ The exact date of the opening of Fort Augustus II and Edmonton House II on the Rossdale Flats is unknown as the documentary records for this period are lost. In the introduction to the *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence: Edmonton House, 1795-1900*, Alice Johnston writes the following: "the exact date of the closing of the Edmonton House with which this volume is concerned cannot be accurately determined because the post journals for seasons 1800-1 to 1805-6 are missing. By September 1806 the post then called Edmonton House was on the site of the present City of Edmonton" (Johnston 1967: lxxvii).

Body of his Companion, another Freeman, who left this Friday in Company with three Southward [Cree] Indians” (Edmonton House Post Journal, March 27, 1814. HBCA B.60/a/12d). While it cannot be stated with complete certainty, it can be inferred that a burial likely took place and it was probably in the Rossdale Flats area. According to Lifeways of Canada Ltd.’s 2003 report, this was the first of 91 historically documented burials in the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground.



Map 1. Locations of various Fort Edmonton's and Augustus'. Map courtesy of Lifeways of Canada Ltd; *Fort Edmonton Burial Ground: An Archaeological and Historical Study* (2003:302).

The Lifeways of Canada report referred to here, and elsewhere within this thesis, is not without its detractors. The researchers' methodological reliance on printed historical documents and archaeological investigations (which they led) as well as the exclusion of oral history, has led to some critique of the findings. Yet, the contract under which Lifeways of Canada Ltd. completed the archaeological investigations at the Fort

Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground in 1999, 2000 and 2001 did not provide for the inclusion or collection of oral histories. Contract work does not normally allow for contractors to stray from the agreed upon objectives and the end results that are produced. Lifeways themselves notes this and recommends that this be completed. "The collection of oral histories, which was *beyond the scope of this study*, will someday add to a more comprehensive cultural picture of the burial ground during its use and abandonment" (Lifeways 2003:228; emphasis added). Yet, the EUB Decision in May 2001 appears to contradict Lifeways when they note that "EPCOR archaeologists indicated that they had not used oral history in their efforts to locate the graveyard because they did not believe it would provide the specific information necessary to aid in their investigations" (2001:44). However, the primary criticism of the report entitled Lifeways of Canada's report entitled *Fort Edmonton Burial Ground: An Archaeological and Historical Study. Final Report*. ASA Research Permit #2001-118, 2003 is that the report was financed by EPCOR and many descendants and activists believe that it is therefore biased. At issue here is historical truth as seen in written records, including maps, fur trade journals and missionary reports and its funding source. Despite the concerns with objectivity and the source of the content, I believe that the thoroughness of the report seems to belie that accusation.

One of the dilemmas facing researchers in their endeavors to discover the history of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground is that the historical record for the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Edmonton (and the North West Company's Fort Augustus) is incomplete – years and sometimes entire decades of post journals are missing. This, along with the early scarcity of missionaries and their accompanying

records in this area, mean that it is not entirely possible to ascertain the extent of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground usage during the 1800s.

Nevertheless, there are many things we know about the burial site through the documentary record. In their analysis, archaeologists and historians for Lifeways of Canada Ltd. indicate that there are 91 recorded burials and they also report the following: "36% died in the winter...46% were under 18, and, of those, only five were over the age of 10...65% were male..." (Lifeways of Canada Ltd. 2003: 82-83)¹⁴.

While it is not always possible to determine ethnicity of the people buried at the site, a review of the historical documents indicates that the majority of the interments are people of Native ancestry, with Métis individuals reflecting a slightly larger percentage of the burials. Although the burial ground is often characterized as solely Aboriginal, the site is in fact indicative of the multi-nation and multi-national composition of Fort Edmonton during the 1800s. Reflected in the burial record are people of Métis, Cree, Blackfoot, Dene, Tsuu T'ina, French-Canadian, Scots, English and Norwegian ancestry.

The Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground was in near continuous usage from the early 1800s until the early 1870s. The apparent "abandonment" of the site was gradual and occurred for numerous reasons. The establishment of Lac Ste. Anne Mission in 1842 under the direction of Father Thibault does not appear to have affected

¹⁴ Throughout the research conducted on this site, it has become apparent that the number of burials is controversial. The Lifeways report will only indicate a burial if there is no evidence that burial took place somewhere else – inconclusive reports (for instance, the death of someone at the fort or recorded in the fort journals does not always mean that they were buried in the fort cemetery) are not included. In a paper presented at the 1994 Rupert's Land Conference held in Edmonton, Milt Wright noted that newspaper accounts from the 1950s indicated that there were over 200 grave markers on the flats in the 1890s (Wright 1994:316). Another idea that emerged from the RFAOHP is that the fort cemetery was placed there as it was the site of a pre-existing Aboriginal burial ground. Historian/ethnographer Kerry Abel notes a possible third reason that the cemetery site in Rosedale may have been chosen. Abel mentions that in the Lake Athabasca area in 1803, "the Canadians buried the bodies [of their dead] in strategic spots where they did not want the HBC to build posts, for 'they well know that if we trespassed on sacred ground that they would have a powerful handle' on the opinions of the Northern Indians, who could point to 'inhuman English'" (1993:83).

the burial rate or patterns of Fort Edmonton's Catholic population. In fact, burials of Catholics still occurred on the Rossdale Flats as indicated by the *Forts des Prairies Burial Register*¹⁵. However, the founding of the St. Albert Mission by Father Lacombe in 1861 (a move that was precipitated by the superior arable land located around the already established Big Lake settlement) had the opposite effect – Catholics ceased to be buried on the Rossdale Flats after 1864¹⁶ and the deceased were instead transported to St. Albert for burial: "Louison Calchouis died last night about eleven o'clock. The boatbuilders made a coffin to day and the body was taken out to St. Albert" (Edmonton House Post Journal, October 24, 1865. HBCA B.60/a/34). The Methodists under Rev. McDougall placed their mission on top of the hill behind the fort (near the present day McDougall United Church on 101 Street south of Jasper Avenue) in 1870. The gradual "abandonment" of the site as a burying place is indicated through the Edmonton House Post Journal entry for September 3, 1871:

A priest from St. Albert came in for Mass in forenoon. Rev. Mr. Campbell preached in the forenoon and Rev. George McDougall in the evening. Mr. Bunn's child was buried [sic] in the afternoon at 3 o'clock near the Mission house. Mr. Brazeau died last night at 11 o'clock and was buried [sic] this evening at St. Albert with the rites of the R.C. Religion. (HBCA B.60/a/38).

The entry itself needs some deciphering: Rev. Mr. Campbell, a Catholic priest, and Rev. McDougall, a Methodist minister are holding separate services; the child of Mr. Bunn was buried near the mission house – the mission house referred to was McDougall's

¹⁵ *The Forts des Prairies Burial Register* is available for review at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. For a discussion of the various names of what we know call Fort Edmonton see Goyette 2004:26, a brief excerpt of which is here: "French-speaking Métis and French-Canadian voyageurs said Fort des Prairies, a names also used for other posts on the upper Saskatchewan...Fur traders tried to float the name Fort Sans Pareil for a short time...Edmonton was the name that stuck."

¹⁶ Lifeways of Canada Ltd. notes that it is entirely possible that Catholics continued to be buried at the Fort Edmonton Cemetery, however there may have been officiant present and there is therefore no written record of the burial.

Methodist Mission which was receiving Protestant burials while Brazeau, like other Catholics, was taken to the old cemetery site in St. Albert. The last known burial on the Rossdale Flats occurred on August 25, 1871 – deaths occurring at the fort after this date resulted in burial in other locations.

Since burials stopped in the 1870s it is not uncommon to hear the graveyard on the Rossdale Flats referred to as “forgotten” or “abandoned”. In spite of this, a review of the newspapers produced in Edmonton from the early 1900s until present indicates a contradiction to this “forgetting”. For instance, in 1943 a local newspaper bears the following headline: “Workmen find bones of five by river side”. The article continues:

the discovery was made in the vicinity of the 105 street bridge. All were in decayed coffins that crumbled to dust when air penetrated to them...City Commissioner R.J. Gibb stated that inquiry would be made to establish whether or not a grave yard existed at this location, and also to endeavor to determine the identity of the remains (Anonymous, CEA Rossdale Files. May 11, 1943; see also Prociuk n.d. 1-2).

A 1958 article in the Edmonton Journal is entitled “Pioneer finds timbers from fort; reveals site of Indian cemetery” (Bower, May 13, 1958:B3). Newspaper articles from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s continue to express bewilderment and awe at the fate of Edmonton’s first cemetery.

As previously mentioned, Fort Edmonton IV was relocated to the grounds now occupied by the Provincial Legislature building and grounds in 1830. The land continued to be held by the Hudson’s Bay Company until 1899 when it was sold to the Edmonton Industrial Exhibition Association (Commonwealth Historic Resources Management 2004: 99-110); in 1903 a portion of this land was re-sold to the Town of Edmonton “for \$1,000, for use as its power and water treatment plants” (2004:104), construction of

which began in 1902. The industrial development occurring on the site had many consequences for the burials the site contained; chief among them was the disturbance of the graves. Perhaps one of the most poignant stories of a disturbance occurred early in the development of the power plant. A female pioneer named Mrs. McQueen relates the following story:

One vivid memory Mother has is of Cecile coming in to the Manse at the time the Edmonton, Yukon and Pacific Railway was being built. The men were digging along near the hill in front of the Fort. Years before a child of Cecile's had been buried in this location. She knew the exact spot, and when the men left, went and took the bones, which she wrapped in her apron to Mother, and asked her to fix a little coffin. She showed she wanted the box covered with black, like the dress she wore, and lined, with white, like her apron, on the inside. Mother did this for her, and the little coffin, was taken out to the burying place on the Reserve at Stony Plain (Mrs. Charles Learmonth. Date unknown. Alberta Folklore and Local History Collection).

Over the next several decades, the number of disturbances increased, culminating in 1967 when the installation of a gas line in the area resulted in the removal of six people from the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground. The removal took place as part of a field school conducted by the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alberta¹⁷. Today, these individuals remain at the University. Many descendants are concerned and in some cases outraged that the remains of their ancestors have been subjected to scientific study¹⁸. In total, Lifeways of Canada Ltd. report that a total of 24 people have been disturbed, removed and relocated to various sites or lost¹⁹

¹⁷ For a discussion of a 1943 disturbance, see John Prociuk's *A Walk Through Time. Edmonton's Municipal Cemeteries: Their History and Historical Value*, an unpublished manuscript available at the City of Edmonton Archives. Prociuk discusses the 1943 disturbance on pages 1 and 2.

¹⁸ For a detailed analysis of the condition of the individuals removed during the 1967 field school see *Further Aspects of Fur Trade Life Depicted in the Skeleton* by Nancy C. Lovell and Aaron A. Dublinenko. *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*. 9:248-256. 1999.

¹⁹ For full details see *Fort Edmonton Burial Ground: An Archaeological and Historical Study. Final Report*. ASA Research Permit #2001-118, 2003 – Table 1: list of reported finds of human remains. Page

(2003:242). In her study on the Sinixt, Paula Pryce relates that "when they exhume the remains of people who lived long ago, archaeologists disinter that collective...an ethnic group which exists now as then" (1999:116). The forced removal of human remains disrupts the connection between past and present, and paradoxically, can spark demand for commemoration to re-establish that connection.

After the field school in 1967, news of human remains found at the site was quiet until November 1976 when "city workers forging a link with the future ...uncovered echoes from Edmonton's pioneering past" (Inwood 1976: no page). The article remarks "an engineering crew, laying telephone cable ducts near the 105th Street Bridge...dug up two skulls and a collection of bones buried under five feet of earth" (1976: no page). According to the Lifeways of Canada report of 2003, these remains were re-interred in a mass, unmarked grave in Beechmount Cemetery, an Edmonton municipal cemetery (2003:242).

On Friday, March 28, 1980, the Edmonton Sun ran a headline entitled "Don't Get Rattled..." along with a picture of human ribs sticking out of the ground. According to the article (no author is provided), the bones most probably were "those of a young Indian boy who likely died long before the turn of this century" (Anonymous 1980:8). The article indicates that the bones were found in the vicinity of 110 Street and 99 Avenue and states further that "human bones have dug up near there before" (Anonymous 1980:8). The article quotes a police officer who notes that the old Fort Edmonton was in this area and a graveyard was nearby²⁰. In 1984, the Edmonton Sun

242. Included in this table are the locations of those removed. However, in some cases, the remains have been lost or cannot be traced.

²⁰ This location is near Edmonton House V on the legislature grounds, not the earlier versions of Edmonton House that were on the Rosedale Flats. Although evidence of a cemetery has not been found on

chose the sensationalist headline: "Ghosts under foot: scores lie buried under the city" (Geiger 1984:B1) along with a photo showing the location of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground as well as a contemporary photo showing an employee of the then Renfrew Park (later John Ducey Park and more recently Telus Field) holding up a phone to determine if there "are any phantoms on the line" (1984:B1). Headlines such as the one used in 1984 by the Edmonton Sun could be viewed as contributing to the neglect and "abandonment" of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground by City administration and a majority of Edmonton's citizens. They provide the view that this is not a matter to be taken seriously – it is merely humorous, comical and is there for our reading pleasure.

Again the newspapers and public opinion appear to fall silent for a few years. There are only three articles in the Edmonton Journal, by then Edmonton's primary newspaper, which mention the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground between 1989 and 1998. It almost seems as though the site had once again been "abandoned" and memory of it faded. In the late 1990s however the attitude toward the old Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground underwent a marked shift due to the increased development on the site. On September 1, 1998 the Edmonton Journal ran a two-page article that provided a great deal of information on the site in Rosedale. Besides providing a brief timeline, reporter Jac MacDonald's article contained references to the number of possible graves, a map showing the location of remains and notations of disturbances that were left in place or removed to another location (MacDonald 1998:B1). This article had a companion piece also written by MacDonald.

the hilltop now occupied by the Legislature grounds, this hypothesis could fit in with those of some of the interviewees of the Rosedale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project who believe there to be a cemetery on top of the hill as well.

The second article entitled "Remains tell story of hardships endured by traders" summarized the osteological research undertaken by physical anthropologists on the human remains housed by the University of Alberta's Anthropology Department. This article, the first in many years, was soon to be joined by a plethora of articles which appeared in not only local newspapers but also other local media outlets, and even national ones.

The RD 11 Redevelopment

In 1999, EPCOR made a submission to the Alberta Energy and Utility Board (EUB) for a proposed redevelopment of the power generating plant on the Rossdale Flats (EUB 2001:6). The redevelopment was required in order for the plant to continue operating at capacity and it involved the creation of a new natural gas turbine (EUB 2001). As required under the auspices of Section 37 of the Alberta Historical Resources Act, 1973 (formerly called the Alberta Heritage Act), EPCOR



Figure 4. New power plant excavation. 1927. Photo courtesy of the Glenbow Museum. Photo No. ND-3-3552

was required to have a Historical Resources Impact Assessment (HRIA) completed and they contracted the above-mentioned Lifeways of Canada Limited. The contract yielded a number of reports – *Rossdale Unit 11 Road and Site Services Relocation Historical Resources Impact Assessment* (January 2000); *The Rossdale RD-11*

Archaeological Project: Information Package (December 2000), the *Rossdale Unit 11 Historical Resources Impact Assessment 2000 Field Studies Final Report* (April 2001) and the fore-mentioned *Fort Edmonton Burial Ground: An Archaeological and Historical Study* (2003) – that attempted to clear some of the confusion surrounding the site. Written after two seasons of archaeological excavations, the reports provide verification for not only the archaeological but also the historical significance of the site. The reports however are controversial. Many descendants and activists believe that as the reports were completed for EPCOR (and funded by EPCOR) that the findings and recommendations contained within them are biased in favour of the utility company. Second, while many archaeologists may be perfectly capable of conducting oral history interviews the skill sets of an archaeologist and an oral historian or ethnographer are different. Adding to this, it is quite likely that even if Lifeways had completed an oral history to accompany their historical and archaeological research, descendants and activists may not have accepted it. Further, many descendants and activists were of the opinion that only Aboriginal researchers could complete the work with the appropriate protocols and sensitivity the project required.

As part of the hearing process into the proposed redevelopment, the EUB held a pre-hearing meeting in April 2000 and followed that with the hearing meetings which had two sessions – October 17 to November 30, 2000 and January 9 to 19, 2001 (EUB 2001:1-2). As part of the hearings, members of the EUB heard submissions from 30 interveners (individuals or organizations who must register to appear at hearings) make their concerns, favourable or not, known to the board. The interveners were composed of various descendants, activists - both Aboriginal and environmental activists such as the

group Concerned Citizens for Edmonton's River Valley (ConCerv), Rossdale Community League, Alberta Community Development (ACD), and many more²¹. The interveners brought forward many valid concerns about pollution, historic buildings and archaeological resources to name a few.

The stance of ACD, the provincial government department responsible for the preservation and interpretation of Alberta's heritage, was interesting. Indicating that they were responsible for archaeological resources, ACD conceded that "the real significance of the archaeological resources [on the Rossdale Flats] was substantially reduced in light of the damage inflicted by long-term heavy industrial use and disturbance at the site" (EUB 2001:49). They further made known the official position that "human remains did not fit the jurisdiction of 'historical resources' as found in the H[istoric] R[esources] Act [1973] and that, consequently, it [ACD] did not have jurisdiction over them" (EUB 2001:49). Blaming a gap in the province's legislation, ACD indicated that the provincial government "was currently taking steps to address this gap in a timely manner" (2001:50). In one of the stranger twists to this story, however, ACD was able to declare a number of buildings on EPCOR's Rossdale sites as provincial historic resources – namely, the Low Pressure Plant, Pumphouse #1 and the Generation Administration Building (EPCOR 2004:7; also Mah 2002 and Brooymans 2001).

Despite the pleas of the interveners, in their 2001 decision on the RD 11 redevelopment at the Rossdale power plant, the EUB decided, "that the proposed Rossdale 170 megawatt (MW) natural gas-fired turbine (RD 11) was in the public

²¹ There are too many interveners to discuss in full. For clarity, I have chosen those I consider most important to the RFAOHP. Not given consideration are interveners who had other issues in mind (traffic patterns for instance). For a complete list of the interveners, all decisions can be accessed through the Energy and Utility Board website at <http://www.eub.gov.ab.ca/bbs/default.htm>. Simply type Rossdale into the search toolbar and the decisions will list.

interest" (EUB 2001:1). However, they also found that contrary to EPCOR's claims, the "public consultation [the company undertook] effort was not as extensive and comprehensive as it might have been" (EUB 2001:16). The EUB also argued "the unique relationship between EPCOR and the City, which has jurisdiction over planning issues, seemed to limit the public's ability to have input" (EUB 2001:16). Regardless of the EUB decision, however, EPCOR decided not to proceed with the RD-11 expansion as the historical designation given to the buildings on the site effectively hindered the proposed development.

The City of Edmonton has a pattern of allowing development to take place over its historic cemeteries. In addition to the cemetery/burial ground located in Rossdale, the previously mentioned Methodist Mission Cemetery has also suffered the consequences of development. This cemetery, believed by some to contain approximately 200 interments, is located under what is now known as Alberta College, in the vicinity of 101 Street south of Jasper Avenue. This site had its major discovery of human remains in 1966 and local historian and author Tony Cashman notes, "there are probably still some poor unfortunates down there" (Cashman as quoted in Geiger 1984:B1). This cemetery along with Livingstone's Cemetery, whose exact location remains a mystery, is discussed in great detail in the Lifeways of Canada Limited report *Fort Edmonton Burial Ground: An Archaeological and Historical Study* and will not be further discussed here.

It is difficult to find mention of similar situations where a roadway or building has been placed on top of a historic cemetery. In a way, however, that statement is untrue – there are mentions but most concern the archaeological excavations or the analysis of the physical remains. The treatment of the sites differs as well. In August

2005 construction workers expanding a road in Toronto cut through a hillside and disturbed an ossuary that was around 700 years old (Wilkes 2005; Finley 2005). The Toronto site was different in one important aspect than the Edmonton site – the Toronto site was provided 24 hour police protection in order to prevent looting. This was not done in Edmonton even in the most recent excavations in 2001. However, it is too early to know what the outcome of this disturbance will be.

In North Dakota, the Pembina Métis Cemetery has become the focus of contention. Pembina was founded in 1818 in order to “provide religious and educational support to Métis families and to convert the Ojibwe” (Swan 1999:81). The mission cemetery site received 166 burials in the span of 44 years, yet by the 1920s the cemetery had been acquired by a local farmer who planted crops over the graves (Swan 1999). Over the hundred years since the last burials took place, numerous attempts were made by descendants to commemorate and protect the site. In her analysis of the Pembina Métis Cemetery, historian Ruth Swan writes “it is significant that...the role of the Métis was not mentioned and the connections with Christianity and the non-Aboriginal Selkirk settlers were emphasized” (1999:86). Swan believes this occurred to make the situation more appealing to state officials who ultimately had to decide what to do with the site²².

In Winnipeg there are numerous cemeteries of the same age, or even older, than the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground. St. John's Anglican Cathedral Cemetery located on Anderson Avenue along the Red River had its first interment in

²² Among the many parallels between the Pembina Métis Cemetery and the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground are the objectives descendant communities have. Swan notes that the Pembina group “want all graves protected from further disturbance. They are concerned that many graves may lay outside the site boundaries as they are currently defined. They want the cemetery boundaries accurately established...they want access for vehicles and they want the cemetery fenced to prevent plowing or encroachment...they want the cemetery maintained in a respectful manner...they want to be treated respectfully and they ask the same for their ancestors' graves” (Swan 1992:91).

1812. The grounds are, in places, well maintained although jumbled; headstones that date back to 1817 can be found next to headstones from the 1990s. There are no ordered rows and tourists are rare. In contrast, St. Boniface Cathedral Cemetery on the other side of the Red River has a manicured appearance and the place is popular with both tourists and wedding photographers. Graves of historically important figures (Louis Riel Jr. and his Lieutenant Ambrose Lepine for instance) are easy to find. There is no need to search – they are all located along the pathway leading to the front entrance of the cathedral's façade.



Figure 5. On the left is St. Boniface Cathedral and its accompanying cemetery; on the right is St. John's Anglican Cathedral and its cemetery. Winnipeg, MB. Photos taken June 2004. These cemeteries are in the same age range as the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground.

Within North America, the destruction of Aboriginal graves in the quest for development has received a lot of attention over the last number of years. However, this is a situation and problem that is not unique to Aboriginal graves. In a 2001 Maclean's article, Shelley Divinich Haggert writes of the despair she felt when her family was contacted by a lawyer who represented a client wanting to buy the old cemetery lot where her ancestors were buried in order to make a parking lot (Haggert 2001:10). Haggert notes, "it's true, sometimes we need to bury the past, but must we pave over it?"

In the constant battle between progress and preserving our heritage, progress is winning” (Haggert 2001).

“...our greatest and best chief Lapotack²³”

To some people, the idea that people are concerned about the fate of individuals they never knew, buried under a roadway and industrial development, is unreasonable. How can the desecration of the graves of people who existed before you were born cause pain? To the descendants and activists involved in the struggle for recognition over the sacredness of this site, these are more than human remains. They are people. Some of them have names which are now lost to us. They all have stories. This is one.

On February 10, 1861 the “remains of Cree Chief Lapotack were interred ... The funeral was attended by all the Protestants, Rev Mr. Woolsey reading the burial service” (Edmonton House Post Journal, February 8, 1861. HBCA B.60/a/31). His body had been brought back to the fort two days earlier by John Cunningham and his party of hunters who relayed the story of how Lapotack’s band thought he had been poisoned by a rival group of Cree. However, the Freeman who composed the hunting party believed instead that he died of a ruptured blood vessel. The Edmonton House Post Journal describes Lapotack as

a good man in every way and [he] always did his best for the whites....Never touched a drop of liquor. His loss to Edmonton House is irreparable [sic]. His family are left for the charity of the HBC and right well do his children deserve to be taken care of (Edmonton House Post Journal, February 8, 1861. HBCA B.60/a/31).

Early references to Lapotack occurred in the 1840s in the diaries of Rev. Robert Rundle – we learn of the struggle Rundle went through to keep Lapotack (or Le Petet as

²³ Edmonton House Post Journal, February 8, 1861. HBCA B.60/a/31

Rundle calls him)²⁴ in the Protestant faith in which Rundle had baptized him and away from the Catholic Father Thibault (Rundle 1977). Through Thomas Woolsey, a later Methodist minister, we learn that he not only considers Lapotack to be "the leading Cree Chief in this section of country" (Woolsey 1989:110) but that Lapotack and his wife (whose name unfortunately is not recorded in this section but she is, in other places, called Maria Kitimakenakoos Moses²⁵) were married on October 18, 1858. Woolsey further writes that he "had not mistaken the sincerity of Joseph Lapotack's profession at his baptism, he having ever since conducting morning and evening prayers in his own tent for the benefit of any who were disposed to attend" (Woolsey 1989: 111).

During the 1850s and 1860s, Lapotack appears often in the writings in the Edmonton House Post Journals. This alone is a rarity as Indians are rarely named in the business records of the post. The importance of Lapotack is recognized by the fort and on October 6, 1856 the clerks write

The Chiefs Lapitugne and Maskepetoon with their respective bands came this afternoon on a trade, they were received with a salute of 3 guns each, Lapitugne has been recognized as a chief of the first rank. After the customary speechifying and smoking the Calumet was gone through the Chiefs got a present of a suit of clothes and a keg of mixed Rum each. They appear to be well satisfied with their treatment and Lapitugne has promised to be one of our Hunters. He gave in a horse on arrival (Edmonton House Post Journal October 6, 1856. HBCA B.60/a/31).

Lapotack's behaviour, however, was not always met with approval. Only five days later, Lapotack is reported to have taken one of the ferry boats, untied its mooring and let it

²⁴ At various times in the Edmonton House Post Journals, Rundle's diaries and Woolsey journals, Lapotack is called by many different names – Lapotack, Le Petet, Lapitugne, Joseph Morin and La Patack are the most common. For the sake of consistency within this thesis the Lapotack spelling is the sole one used.

²⁵ This reference to the name of Lapotack's wife is made by Lifeways of Canada Ltd. in *Fort Edmonton Burial Ground: An Archaeological and Historical Study. Final Report*. ASA Research Permit #2001-118. The name is included in Table 3: List of all burials at Fort Edmonton Burial Ground. Page 246.

float down the river when he arrived at the fort in the middle of the night and there was no one awake to trade with him. The fort decided to wait out the punishment as they believed an apology would shortly come forward. Indeed, on October 13, 1856 two fort hunters, Mēsokotewakus and Appetaw brought in a "humble apology from Chief Lapitugne for his misdemeanors in setting adrift a ferry boat²⁶" (Edmonton House Post Journal HBCA B.60/a/31).

As we have seen, Lapotack was a person who mattered to Fort Edmonton, its inhabitants and the missionaries. His body was buried in the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground after his death and it is possible that Lapotack remains there today. It is also possible that Lapotack is one of the many people whose mortal remains have been removed from the site. Today, many of the descendants of Lapotack live on the Enoch Cree First Nation west of Edmonton and where he is considered by many people to be the founder of their band.

"the dead retreat into the past"

One of the larger problems facing a project such as this involves the tracing of descendants. Of the 91 historically documented burials recorded by Lifeways of Canada Limited, only 71 have some sort of name or identifying characteristic that return their name to them – the rest remain nameless. Some of those interred are recorded with little information which will assist contemporary researchers in the identification of descendants or family lines. For instance, on May 4, 1819, a Cree man named The Loon was buried – that is all we know of him (Edmonton House Post Journal. HBCA B.60/a/22). Other entries provide little more: a woman believed to be Métis, was buried

²⁶ For the full story of the set adrift boat, please see the entry for October 11, 1856.

on June 14, 1832 and all that is recorded in the journal is that she "belong[ed] to a half breed" (Edmonton House Post Journal. HBCA B.60/a/24).

Stories of unbearable multiple losses emerge as well. Jean Murray Cole in her biography of her ancestor Archibald McDonald, a senior officer with the Hudson's Bay Company, tells the story of his three young sons, Donald, James and Joseph who died within six days of each other in May 1845 of scarlet fever (Cole 2001:253; see also Lifeways of Canada Limited 2003:244) as the family passed through Edmonton. Their loss was not entirely unique. Edouard Breland dit Valade and Genevieve Mondion (or Moingon) lost a young daughter on December 25, 1855 and on December 10, 1856 they lost another infant (see entries from the *Fort des Prairies Burial Register*; these deaths and burials are also referenced in Lifeways of Canada Limited 2003:246). George Hodgson (or Hudson) and Mary Rowland also suffered multiple losses. A young son died in February 1858 shortly after his birth, another in January 1859 and a third young son died in January 1863 (Lifeways of Canada Limited 2003:246-7). Rev. Thomas Woolsey provides us with his account of the February 1858 burial:

I proffered to officiate at the funeral of a child who died yesterday but was not allowed, although their own priest was not near them. Even one of the grandfathers who is a protestant, and who was in an adjoining building, was not apprized of the burial and consequently was hindered from following his grandchild to the grave. Like the ancient Romans, the priests seem to be without natural affection. (Woolsey 1989:67-68).

Maurice Halbwachs writes "to the extent that the dead retreat into the past, this is not because the material measure of time that separates them from us lengthens; it is because nothing remains of the group in which they passed their lives, and which needed to name them, that their names slowly become obliterated" (1992:73). Is this what has

happened to the names of those buried on the flats? Has time simply obliterated their names? Or were their names ever considered important enough to record in the first place? Were their names even known to those who buried them? The Edmonton House Post Journals, all fort journals for that matter, are primarily the business record (along with account books which form the economic record) of the fort's transactions. Unlike the account books, they do not contain detailed entries of who purchased what when and for how much. The journal entries inform the intended reader (the Hudson's Bay Company officials back in London) of the goings-on of the fort. They often start with an entry about the weather and proceed to discuss the comings and goings of the various Indian groups in the area. References to illness are provided only when they have the possibility of affecting the ability of the men to work:

The following men off duty unwell, Leander Renaud, very ill with cramps and fits. Wm. Bird something of the same sort, Thomas Hodgson sore breast, Donald McDonald, green hand, sick all winter, most of it sham. George Hodgson ill all summer and winter, consumption. Montgomery laid up with a sprained wrist, total 6 off duty (Edmonton House Post Journal. April 11, 1865. HBCA B.60/a/34).

Thomas Hodgson would succumb to his sore breast on August 10, 1865: "This day about one o'clock P.M. poor old Thomas Hodgson who has been unwell a long time breathed his last, then the boatbuilders who were at their usual work began to make the coffin" (Edmonton House Post Journal. HBCA B.60/a/34). He was buried in the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground on August 11, 1865 and fort worker Beauchaine was instructed to dig his grave. His descendants, including the George Hodgson mentioned above, married into many of the local Métis families and form part of the core of an indigenous Métis population. It can be surmised that Thomas Hodgson is the

Protestant grandfather of the young Hodgson/Rowland infant buried in 1858; the father of Mary Rowland was Catholic. The interments of the infant and later Thomas Hodgson provide us with another view of the old fort cemetery/Aboriginal burial ground – that of a family cemetery or graveyard.

At times, the entries in the journals seem almost incongruous: “No Services – and not a soul stirring about – times very dull. Sickness (Small pox) still goes on at the Big Lake some 3 or 4 deaths the past week – nearly 300 of the inhabitants of that Colony dead now” (Edmonton House Post Journal November 20, 1870. HBCA B.60/a/37). The clerk on this day did not seem to grasp the connection between the widespread mortality at the Big Lake (St. Albert settlement) and his “very dull” times.

The names of fort servants rarely made it into the journals. Entries noted whether the boatbuilders were working on a particular day or how active the sawpit was. Yet even those obscure entries can provide us with information about mortality at Fort Edmonton. We know that a lot of children died in 1865 and the boatbuilders were busy with this additional work.

Mr. Christie's daughter died at two o'clock this morning, after an illness of four days, scarlet fever, malignant with sore throat. No work done today, all the people of the Fort attended the Funeral of Mr. Christie's child, who was interred in the afternoon. Several people sick in the Fort, Scarlet Fever progressing. (Edmonton House Post Journal. January 15, 1865. HBCA B.60/a/34).

The maintenance and care of the cemetery and burial ground was recorded with a simple entry from June 24, 1867 where it is mentioned that Antoine Savard was fencing the graveyard (Edmonton House Post Journal. HBCA B.60/a/36).

In contrast to the distanced descriptions of death above, in some instances the emotions of the day even made it into the post journal. Such is the case in this notation marking the death of an infant belonging to Patrick Small and Nancy Hughes:

When we beheld the poor little Babe extending its cold and trembling Hands, thankful as it was, for the least intermission from the pangs of dissolution, and saw the anguish and compassionate looks of his attending parents and relations, we could no longer bear the scenes of affliction but tore ourselves from it, lamenting our own inability to afford any relief to the sufferings of humanity. (Edmonton House Post Journal. November 6, 1823. HBCA B.60/a/4)

Our encounters with the inquiries of the historical record invite a number of questions about how we see the past in the present. We don't know much more about the daughter of Mr. Christie or the young child of Patrick and Nancy. But is it necessary to know more about these individuals in order to protect the site where they were laid to rest by those who loved them? Do we need to know when they were born and to whom? We know this information for some of the interred but not for all. Does that mean that the lives of those individuals who have names have more value than those who do not? And if the historical record does not make them real for us, does not make them come alive, is that not what the voices of descendants are for? The inadequacy of solely depending on written documents when reconstructing the past has long been known. However both the City of Edmonton and EPCOR showed a strong hesitation, even reluctance, to partake in oral history research prior to late 2002. Yet, as it turned out, they were about to be informed that the choice for inclusion of this type of research was no longer theirs.

Chapter Three:

The Rossdale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project

In August 2001, Gene Zwozdesky, then Alberta's Minister of Community Development wrote a letter to Edmonton's then mayor, Bill Smith. In this letter, Zwozdesky reiterated the need for a comprehensive history of the Rossdale Flats site. In particular, he stressed:

While archival research will no doubt shed much light on the situation, in particular from a non-Aboriginal perspective, no historical investigation of this type could be considered balanced and complete if the large, parallel body of knowledge that resides in the minds of people most closely connected to the deceased were not included. This oral history would need to be garnered from First Nations, Métis and non-Aboriginal communities....Therefore, I would urge you to add an oral history component to the research proposed for the Rossdale area (Zwozdesky 2001 as shown in Commonwealth 2004 Appendix 1).

In September of 2002, the City of Edmonton's Planning and Development department proceeded with the Historical Land Use Study (HLUS). The terms of reference for the project did not include an oral history component. The Edmonton Aboriginal Affairs Committee (EAUAC), an advisory body to mayor, council and administration for the City of Edmonton, stood firm in its belief and support of the necessity of an oral history project. Through a series of negotiations, EAUAC was able to secure partial project funding from the Community Services Department of the City of Edmonton in the amount of \$60,000. A volunteer seconded from EAUAC (myself) with assistance provided by City staff would manage the project which was given the name of the Rossdale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project (RFAOHP). While the project name made specific mention of Aboriginal oral histories, early in the project's inception EAUAC determined that in order to have a complete oral history it was necessary to

include other communities. It was also decided that it was not enough to interview only descendants of people buried at the site. While they would form the basis of the study and would, in fact, end up comprising the majority of the interviews, the project also included interviews with activists and other community members.

A list of potential interviewees was initially selected from the people who attended public meetings concerning the site. An introductory letter to the project was sent out by the Project Manager and the Chair of EAUAC. The letter explained the rationale behind the project and provided contact information for EAUAC. After the hiring of the project contractor, individuals sent the introductory letter were contacted directly by a member of the team and asked if they would participate and, additionally, if there was anyone else they thought we should speak with. A number of the interviews that were completed came about through the project team being directed to the interviewee by a third party. People who had not attended meetings due to distance or non-notification were therefore included in the project. In addition to descendants, individuals associated with other members of the Rosedale Stakeholders Group were included as well. Interviews were conducted with members of the Rosedale Community League and the group, ConCerv. As well, the decision was made to include people who were not descendants in the strict biological sense but who claimed a connection through their shared sense of place and are, in fact, part of the larger descendant community (see the discussion on descendant communities as defined by Singleton and Orser later in this chapter).

From the time of inception to the beginning of interviews, there was an interval of approximately nine months. In that time, the RFAOHP went through thirteen

revisions to its Terms of Reference. There was disagreement pertaining to maintenance of the copyright of the material (in the end, the copyright remained with EAUAC as the sponsoring organization), and there was also considerable disagreement over the qualifications that would be required in a consultant. EAUAC had in mind a consultant with ties to Edmonton's Aboriginal communities and an understanding of the appropriate protocol involved in working with Elders and other members of the Aboriginal communities in Edmonton. In contrast, the City of Edmonton's initial concern was that the consultant had the appropriate education and experience and wanted to follow the requirements set forth by the Planning and Development department for the consultant for the HLUS. There was even disagreement over the use of the word "consultant" as consultants have the ability to make recommendations. In the end, it was decided that instead of a consultant the Request for Proposals (RFP) would look for a contractor - the primary difference is that a contractor brings forward *findings* instead of *recommendations*. Although this may seem like a trite difference, in the world of municipal politics, anywhere in fact, it is rather substantial. Recommendations brought forward by a consultant have, or appear to have, more of a standing of authority behind them. Findings, on the other hand, do not have any authority. Findings are merely what has been shown to occur. It could also be argued that neither findings nor recommendations have any power on their own - someone still needs to read them and choose to act upon them (or not).

Once this decision was made, a funding proposal was written and submitted in February 2003 to the Alberta Heritage Resources Foundation for financial assistance with the project. A number of months later, notification of approval was received and a

further \$15,000 was allocated to the project budget bringing the total to \$75,000. Upon the securing of funding, the EAUAC in coordination with the Assistant Project Manager circulated the Request for Proposals (RFP) through individual contacts, the Edmonton Journal, the City of Edmonton website and the Canadian Heritage Information Network website (chin.ca) seeking a contractor. The RFP advised potential contractors of the total allowable budget, the timeline that needed to be adhered to and the reporting requirements. At a meeting of the project's Advisory Group (a group of volunteers consisting of Elders, members of EAUAC, the former EAUAC Chair and three academics from the University of Alberta), the submitted proposals were narrowed down and one contractor and their adjacent team was selected.

In the six months between June and December 2003, the contract team, led by the volunteer project manager seconded from EAUAC, struggled to overcome feelings of distrust that many descendants and community members had of the City of Edmonton. For decades, city and EPCOR workers had uncovered graves in the Rossdale Flats, posed for pictures with the remains (see Appendix B for an example of such a photograph) and relayed the accounts of the discovery of the cemetery and burial ground in various Edmonton newspapers for decades. For the most part this struggle was successful and a total of 27 interviews were conducted. Interviewees were divided into three distinct categories – descendants, those with a professional and more recent connection to the site, and activists.

The project team adopted a standard protocol of giving a gift of tobacco, blanket and honoraria to each interviewee as compensation for their time and knowledge. If a person felt uncomfortable accepting the offered gift, they were asked for advice in how

they would like to proceed. Interviews were primarily conducted in the interviewees' place of residence or another place where they would feel comfortable. The project team traveled to many locations within central Alberta. In two situations, due to the distance involved, interviews were conducted over the telephone and the gift was sent by Canada Post. Where necessary, interpreters were available for Cree, Blackfoot and French translation.

An analysis²⁷ of the interviews illustrates that knowledge of the site was passed down within some family lines²⁸ while in others it was not. For instance, Elder Marge Friedel indicated in her interview with members of the RFAOHP contract team that she recalled her aunt discussing the burial ground (RFAOHP 2004:34), while Elder Clara Woodbridge did not have any recollection of anyone in her family discussing the burials (RFAOHP 2004:35). In an interview published in the book *The Myths We Live By*, John Byng-Hall notes that "family storytelling is more than chance personal reminiscing, although it may begin with such memories: the main point is that a parent or grandparent wants to pass on that particular information about the past, feels it important that their descendants should know about it" (1990:216). If this is the case, the question must be asked why some families, or family lines to be more precise, did not pass on knowledge regarding the burials on the Rosedale Flats. There are many possible explanations for this – family knowledge died out with previous generations; the conversation may have been deemed to be too painful for discussion within the family; there is also the distinct

²⁷ Within this thesis, I will not present the entire set of findings from the RFAOHP. There is a separate written report for that as written by the contact team. This report is available in all City of Edmonton public libraries and online at www.aboriginal-edmonton.com. Presented here will be select points and key quotes only.

²⁸ The term family lines as used here and throughout refers to people who share a common ancestor regardless of whether or not the descent is through paternal or maternal ancestry.

possibility that migration of descendants from Edmonton may have weakened their connection to the site. Although this is an interesting question it was not examined in detail and serves as a future research question.

One of the more intriguing revelations was that a number of people who are, or may be, descendants of people buried on the Rosedale Flats, had no prior knowledge of their ancestor's burial place until recent media attention encouraged them to conduct personal genealogical research. During the interview, people were asked what they hoped would happen to the site. The majority indicated that they wanted to see the road (and possibly even the power plant) removed; almost all interviewees want to see the site, and those involved in working to protect the site, treated with respect. On this point however, an interesting discrepancy arose involving people who do not live in the Edmonton area. A few of the descendants interviewed indicated there was no need to remove Rosedale Road from atop the cemetery – the majority of those with this response lived outside of the Edmonton area. One could perhaps assume that as they are not confronted with the dilemma of taking one of the few bridges across the North Saskatchewan River into Edmonton's downtown area and therefore driving over graves, the road removal question did not affect them to the same extent.

Another major theme that emerged from the interviews concerned the location and size of the cemetery and burial ground. Many interviewees expressed the belief, based on either their own historical research or family stories, that there is more than one cemetery on the flats – one for Natives and one for non-Natives. Some further believe that burials extend to the east of the approved commemoration site under not only EPCOR property but possibly to the northeast under Telus Field.

Perhaps the most difficult portion of the interviews involved the discussion around the disturbance and removal of people from their graves at the site. Numerous interviewees expressed the need for the immediate repatriation and reburial of those individuals removed. At the time of writing, this has yet to occur. While a date has been proposed numerous times, there has been and continue to be numerous delays experienced. The reason varies – the proper permits haven't been filed; not enough consultation has taken place; the party(ies) holding the people removed from the site have not begun their consultation process; and so on. The repatriation and reburial of eight individuals removed from the site took place in August 2005. The details surrounding the ceremony that will take place are still under review. There is a lack of agreement as to what format the ceremony should take. As was shown earlier, the burials on the Rosedale Flats encompass people of varied nations and religions. There is dissension among some descendants over the involvement of Catholic and Anglican priests. There is disagreement over whether or not all people removed from the site should be returned. Some people believe that the only people who should return to the site are those of Native ancestry. Many of those involved, myself included, believe that anyone who was removed from the site has the right to be returned. Another point of view involves those who have been removed and re-interred elsewhere. Most notably this concern involves Colin Fraser, a one-time bagpiper to Sir George Simpson. Fraser's death is one of the most lamented in the Edmonton House Post Journals:

Early this morning a message arrived from Lac Ste. Annes [sic] bringing the melancholy intelligence of the awfully sudden death of Mr. Colin Fraser Lac Ste. Annes [sic], he dropped down dead suddenly, was in perfect health at the time. He has been a faithful honest servant to the Hudson's Bay Company for 40 years – his life is about 60. He leaves a large Family to lament his loss. (April 20, 1867; HBCA B.60/a/36)

Fraser's body was brought for burial at the Fort Edmonton Cemetery; years later his family exhumed him and re-buried him in the Methodist Mission Cemetery. Colin Fraser's body made one last journey when his family again exhumed him and buried him for a third time in what was called the West End Cemetery (now called Edmonton Cemetery). Colin Fraser's grave remains there and his granite tombstone can be viewed. Many members of the Stakeholders group believe that Colin Fraser has been moved enough and it is likely that he will remain in the Edmonton Cemetery, a decision many of his descendants support.

The Rossdale Stakeholders

In order to understand the complexities of the project, it is necessary to discuss the Rossdale Stakeholders. As both an informal and formal group, the Rossdale Stakeholders have, and continue to play, a vital yet poorly understood role in the future of the site. An entire thesis itself could be devoted to a discussion of the various stakeholders and participants in the events surrounding the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground. The stakeholders here are, of course, those with an interest in the site – descendants, contemporary community groups, the City of Edmonton and EPCOR. It is not possible to look at all groups and individuals as the number not only fluctuates (at its peak, the Rossdale Stakeholders – an entity that has no official membership criteria but is more or less the result of the coalescing of a group of interested people, organizations and agencies with a vested interest in Rossdale as a whole, not just the cemetery and burial ground - numbered over 180) an exact tally of membership was not done. People attending meetings are required to sign-in on a secret

ballot-like slip of paper and due to the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act are required to place the paper into a sealed container. Ostensibly this is done so personal information such as addresses and phone numbers are not seen by those who are present. The names and addresses form the contact list maintained by city administration for the Rosedale Stakeholders Group. The list itself is used to contact people to inform them of meetings, information mail outs and the like. The list in its entirety is not provided to stakeholders themselves. Within this section, I will explore some of the larger or more "powerful" participants with particular attention given to the descendants and their affiliations. The groups discussed here are those who have concerns more directly related to the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground.

However, before proceeding with a discussion of some of the stakeholders, it is necessary to discuss the concept of a descendant community. Archaeologists Theresa Singleton and Charles Orser define a descendant community as "present-day groups of people whose heritage is under investigation at an archaeological site or who have some other historical, cultural, or symbolic link to the site" (2003:143). The definition they provide is vital to an understanding of the Rosedale Stakeholders. A descendant community does not mean only those who can prove their *biological descent* from the people interred at the site, it is those who have a connection to the site. Singleton and Orser further break a descendant community into two distinct groups: "a *local or resident*" community (2003:144; emphasis in original) and a "*diasporic community*" (2003:114; emphasis in original). Both of these types of descendant communities are at play in the situation at Rosedale.

EAUAC

The first group requiring explanation is the EAUAC, which, as already indicated, is a volunteer advisory body to Mayor and Council. The current incarnation of EAUAC began in 1994 and its purpose is

to act as a catalyst to developments for Aboriginal people in the City of Edmonton and to act as a liaison, advisory and support body to the City of Edmonton, and its representatives in its dealings with the Aboriginal people living in the City of Edmonton (EAUAC Orientation Binder 2003 Term).

Unique among the civic committees, the EAUAC is responsible for the selection of its members who are then approved by the City Council. Other civic committees have a selection process wherein membership is approved by City Council before they are appointed. The membership of EAUAC consists of at least ten people, a majority of whom are Aboriginal. Their membership is further defined as "being without consideration as to tribal origin or membership in any special interest group" and further "members will be selected based on their merit and commitment to the Aboriginal community" (EAUAC 2003). Their areas of responsibility are:

1. to ensure that effective community communication and consultation play a major role in the efforts of the EAUAC to fulfil [sic] its purpose
2. to assist the efforts of other agencies, organizations, etc., who are addressing issues of concern to urban Aboriginal people
3. to receive advice, recommendations, reports or complaints from individuals or groups addressing issues of concern to urban Aboriginal people, and identify appropriate action
4. to investigate, develop solutions, and make recommendations to appropriate bodies on areas of concern to urban Aboriginal people and the City of Edmonton
5. to provide input on the development and implementation of City of Edmonton policies, program services and initiatives, which will have an impact on the Aboriginal people living in Edmonton
6. to request assistance, if and when required, from any appropriate agency or organization to improve the role of EAUAC

7. to strike standing, ad-hoc or sub-committees, as necessary, to address specific or urgent concerns. (EAUAC 2003).

EAUAC is supported with financial and human resources by the City of Edmonton's Community Services Department.

Within its first seven years of incorporation, EAUAC primarily took a soft approach to the situation at Rosedale. Executive members of the committee did write letters to the Mayor and Council and administration at the times and they did request to be informed of the decisions that took place. They did not however advocate for change in the situation in a public forum nor undertake research in those early years. It is this lack of action, or rather the perceived lack of action, that has led many people, primarily descendants, to question their efficacy in this matter. The first major action EAUAC undertook on the Rosedale situation was the sponsoring of the oral histories project.

Aboriginal Groups

Today it is common to think of Edmonton as predominantly Cree territory. The First Nations communities that are in the Edmonton area today contain not only Crees (Enoch; Alexander) but also Nakota Sioux (Alexis; Paul) and a dissolved Iroquois band (Michel). As was shown in Chapter Two, the burials on the Rosedale Flats include people of many different ethnic backgrounds and while Métis may comprise the majority of the burials there are many Indian nations represented – Cree, Blackfoot, Dene, Beaver, Sarcee, and possibly Iroquois. It is perhaps indicative of this multi-ethnic history that there were no clear Aboriginal groups advocating in the conflict at Rosedale. Some groups did emerge into the forefront – the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Papasschase Band, and the Blackfoot First Nations Thunder Society – yet, for the most part, it was a

fracturable group of people with the general goal of preserving the final resting place of their ancestors. This descendant community was both local and diasporic. A number of descendants lived in Edmonton and the surrounding area, however, the dissolution of the Papasschase band in 1888 (Goyette 1999:H1; also Lameman 2001), meant that descendants were found on First Nations as far as Kehewin, 260 kilometres northeast of Edmonton.

The Francophones

As discussed earlier, people of many nations and nationalities are buried on the Rosedale Flats. Contemporary Edmonton's vibrant Francophone community has its roots in the fur trade, initially through the North West Company, and then through a steady influx of French speaking settlers well into the 1900s. The Saskatchewan District also recorded an early presence of Freeman²⁹, referred to by North West Company trader Daniel Williams Harmon as

superannuated Canadians, who have spent the flower of their days in the service of the Company, who have families that they are unwilling to leave; and having nothing to attract them to the civilized world, they continue under the protection of the Company, and are supplied by them, with the necessaries of life (1905:xvi-xvii).

Although references to early freemen are scarce, they do occur. The earliest mention of freemen in the Fort Edmonton records is dated April 5, 1797. A year later on April 12, 1798 there is a reference to a free Frenchman called "the Cat" but no other identifiers are provided and account books for this early time period have not survived.

²⁹ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the ethnogenesis of the Métis in the Saskatchewan District and the role that the Freeman and Iroquois play in their emergence. For more complete discussions on this matter please see John E. Foster's "Wintering, the Outsider Male and the Ethnogenesis of the Western Plains Métis." in *Prairie Forum* 19. Spring 1994. Pages 1-13; also Trudy Nicks' "The Iroquois and the Fur Trade in Western Canada." in *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference*. 1978. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Pages 85-101; and Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown's *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*. 1985. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

In Ambition and Reality: the French-speaking Community of Edmonton 1795-1935, a book based on his Master's thesis in history, Edward John Hart notes that "French was the universally accepted language of the [fur] trade until the middle of the nineteenth century. As such it was in general the language in use around Forts Edmonton and Augustus" (1980:7). In 1838, Fort Edmonton received their first Catholic missionaries in the form of Fathers Blanchet and Demers. Although only staying at Fort Edmonton for less than a week, the two priests placed a large cross on the hill where the fort was located to maximize its visibility and "performed numerous baptisms and marriages mostly among the French-Canadians and the Métis" (Hart 1980:9).

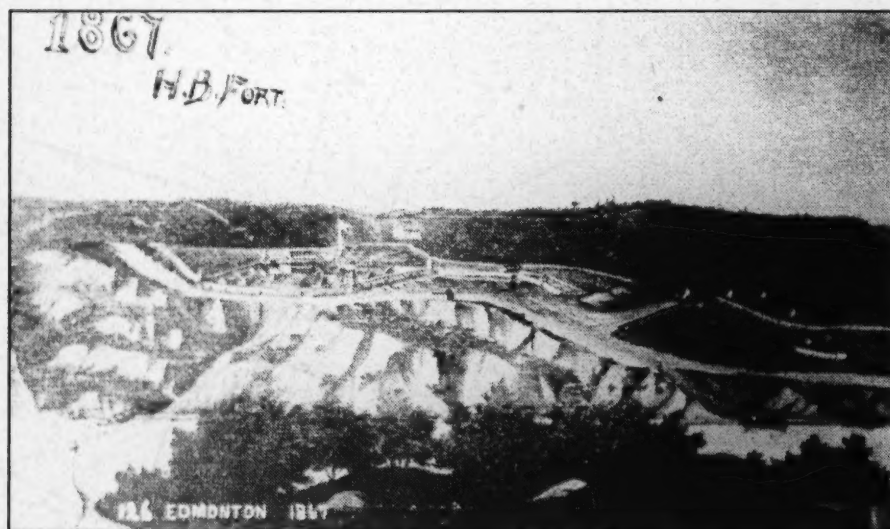


Figure 6. Father Emile Petitot painting of Fort Edmonton, 1867. On the right of the picture is a fenced area encasing a grove of trees that is believed to mark the cemetery and burial ground. Petitot has placed a cross within the fort on the hilltop on the left. Photo courtesy of the City of Edmonton Archives. EA-10 - 2928.6

The arrival of the Wesleyan missionary Rundle in 1840 caused concern among some of the Métis of Fort Edmonton and area and on June 19, 1842, Father Thibault was assigned to the area on a permanent basis (Hart 1980; see also MacPherson 1998; Lifeways of Canada 2003). In 1843, Father Thibault established the mission site at what had previously been termed Man'tow Sâkahikan, God's Lake or Devil's Lake and which he renamed Lac Ste. Anne (Anderson-McLean 1999; see also Drouin 1973; MacPherson 1998). In 1852, Father Thibault left the mission and was replaced by Father Albert Lacombe who on September 19, 1852 arrived at Fort Edmonton. In his memoirs, Father Lacombe wrote that the fort "was made up of a few French-Canadians married to Métis or Indian women, a few Métis families, and a small number of Scotchmen and Englishmen, all employees of the Company" (Lacombe as quoted in Hart 1980:11).

It is not known for certain how many Francophones are buried in the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground. The *Forts des Prairies* burial register located at the Provincial Archives of Alberta is a record left by the Oblates and it does list Catholic services. However, not all Catholics were or are Francophones. Within this situation, there has been a tendency to, perhaps unconsciously, lump the two groups together. A review of the literature on the Francophone population and its history in not only Edmonton but Alberta as well shows that there is also a tendency to merge the French-Canadian population with the Métis population – a tendency to treat the two groups as one. It is, in fact, difficult at times to tell where one group starts and the other ends in the literature. The reason behind this almost forced cohesion is unclear; not enough research has been done on the historical Métis community of Edmonton and area in order to adequately explain how this joining in the literature has occurred. This

blurring of the two – Métis and Francophone - has also been seen among the Rossdale descendants. For instance, two descendants of Jean-Baptiste Lagimodiere and Marie-Anne Gaboury, who in 1813 was the first non-Aboriginal woman in Edmonton, are spokespeople for different organizations – one for the Métis Nation of Alberta and the other for the L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta.

The Francophone descendant community at Rossdale is, according to the parameters set forth by Singleton and Orser, both of a local and a diasporic nature (though primarily local). This descendant community is not as evident as the Aboriginal descendant community – this could partly be the result of the previously mentioned blurring with the local Métis community. However, this could also be the effect of family stories that are not passed on. As noted earlier, family stories are passed on for specific reasons – so that knowledge can be continued. Many of the Francophones in the Edmonton area today may not trace their descent to those earlier fur traders but could in fact be the descendants of the many French-speaking people brought in by the colonization companies.

The City of Edmonton and EPCOR

Another stakeholder in the conflict at Rossdale is, of course, the City of Edmonton. Incorporated as a city in 1904, the City of Edmonton's early history has been discussed above. Here it is necessary to look at the City of Edmonton and the role it has played in the industrial development of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground site located on the Rossdale Flats.

In 2002, the City of Edmonton issued a Fort Edmonton Burial Ground Commemoration, Rossdale Program Statement. Within this document (accessible on the

City of Edmonton website, www.edmonton.ca), the City of Edmonton created the foundation for the recognition and later commemoration of the site. It also demarcated the boundary of the study area and its future as follows:

the area bounded by the current EPCOR utilities site fence line, 105 Street, 96 Avenue and the river should become a park containing a legally designated cemetery area, an interpretive centre, an area for sitting and quite [sic quiet] contemplation and a monument containing the names of those known to be buried at the site (Edmonton 2002:1-2). [See figure 7 below]

It is worthwhile to note that the determination of what the site would look like in the future took place *before* consultations had begun. It is also worth noting that the schedule and deadlines contained within the program statement written September 19, 2002 indicated that the Stakeholders (in this case, primarily descendants) would sign off on the proposal by October 22, 2002, just over one month later.

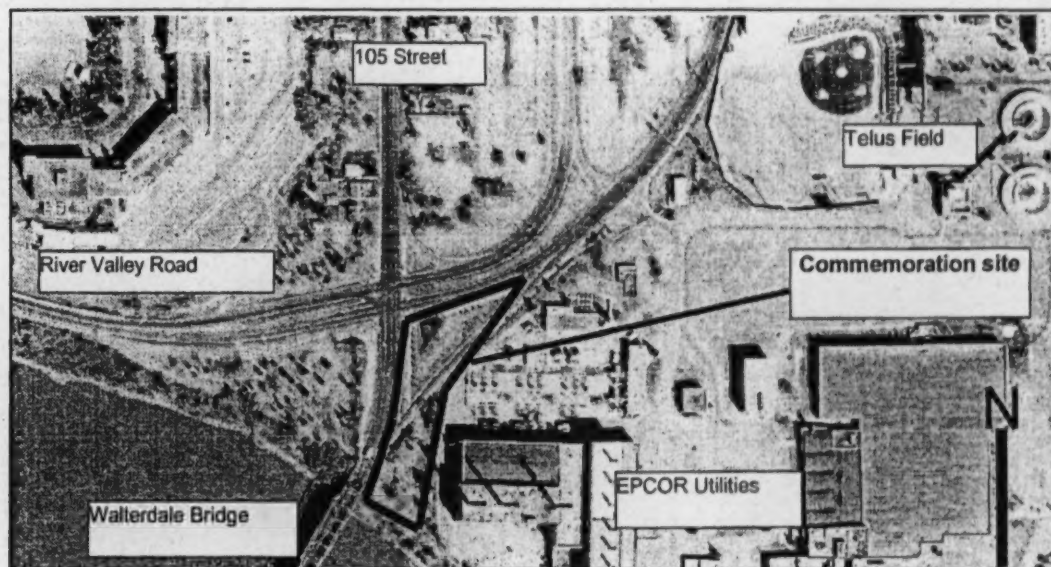


Figure 7. Aerial photo of the commemorative site on the Rossdale Flats. Photo used with permission of the City of Edmonton.

It is difficult to determine, at times, the role the City of Edmonton has played in the industrial development on the Rosedale Flats. There is confusion over where the boundary between the City of Edmonton and EPCOR (formerly Edmonton Power) lies. Since the inception of the Edmonton Electric Lighting and Power Company in 1891, a power plant has occupied the northern banks of the North Saskatchewan River. In its early years, the Edmonton Electric Lighting and Power Company was subjected to numerous floods and in 1902, the company was made public and according to EPCOR it became "the first municipally owned electric utility in Canada" (<http://www.epcor.ca/About+EPCOR/Who+We+Are/History.htm>, accessed November 3, 2004). In 1915, the North Saskatchewan River again flooded, this time the water reached a height of 45 feet above its normal level (EPCOR; see also Commonwealth Historic Resources Management 2004). The flooding on the site was significant over the years – it caused the final relocation of the fort to higher ground and according to one descendant, Calvin Bruneau/Desjarlais

There may have been human remains that may have been removed because of that [flooding]. The thing is we don't know to what extent...I don't know how many of those burials were affected. I'm just speculating but I believe some of them – probably not all of them – but I believe some of them would've been disturbed (RFAOHP 2004:57).

However it is just as likely that the flooding could have had the opposite effect and covered undisturbed burials in layers of silt and debris (see interview with Barb McDermott-Budesheim/Houle RFAOHP 2004:58).

EPCOR's official history book, *Candles to Kilowatts: The Story of Edmonton's Power Company* (Marshall and Culbertson 2002), recounts the history of Edmonton's power company from its inception to present day. Outlining EPCOR's continued

relationship with the City of Edmonton, Marshall and Culbertson make only two mentions of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground in the 130-page book. The first mention is found in the timeline of the company that winds its way through the book's pages.

One of the entries for 1967 reads: "Workers installing a gas line near the Rosedale Power Plant unearth *ancient* human remains" (Marshall and Culbertson 2002:63; emphasis added). This is the

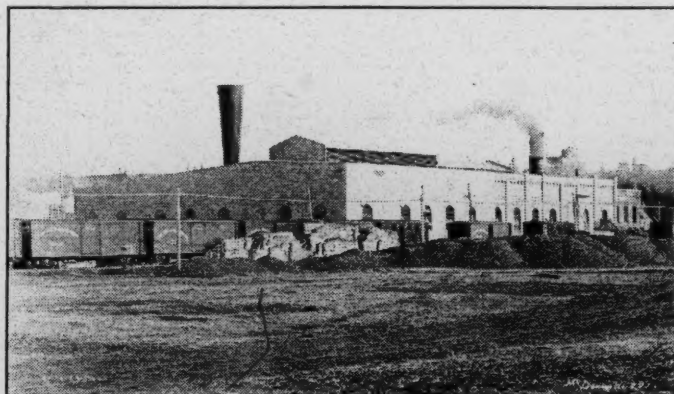


Figure 8. Edmonton Power Company. 1912. Courtesy of the Glenbow Archives. Photo NC-6-271.

only recent document referring to the people buried on the Rosedale Flats as ancient – a term that surely cannot properly refer to burials that range from approximately 200 to 135 years ago. The second time the burials are referred to, little more information is provided – the burials are referred to in the context of the plans to abandon the RD-11 development. Today, EPCOR is a public utility; privatization attempts in the mid-1990s failed. Their only shareholder is the City of Edmonton, but EPCOR is run at arms-length from the City (<http://www.epcor.ca/About/Governance/default.htm>).

As has been shown different types of memory exist. In the context of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground it is necessary to remember that it is these different types of memory – urban, corporate and family – that have influenced the past and determined the future of the burials. These memories are not the same. They are

created and used for different purposes yet it is possible for the memories to be jointly utilized in the form of commemoration.

Acceptance of the report and its findings

The final report on the oral histories relating to the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground was submitted to the City of Edmonton in February 2004. To date, the findings of the report have not made an impact on the size or direction of the commemoration site. After its submission, in a general conversation I had with a city staff member who has played a fairly prominent role in the City of Edmonton's response to the situation at Rosedale, I asked about the potential impact of the RFAOHP. The following was his response: I don't believe it [the oral history study] will have any impact. It's [the commemoration project] occurring within an assigned piece of land and the design is pretty much complete. The City will likely put more credibility on the land use project as it built with hard data while the Oral Histories project is just stories (Anonymous, personal communication, 2004). While I never expected the project to have a large impact – that all boundaries would magically change, become fluid, or that it would change the opinion of the City administrators involved, I did hope that the project would serve a purpose. I even dared hope that it be read and not sit on shelves in the various departments it was submitted to. If that is all that is done with the resultant report, all 400-odd pages of it, what was the point? A cynic would answer that the point was to keep people occupied; to make them feel as though they were contributing. For instance, in their interview with the RFAOHP contract team, John and Diane Oxenford of ConCerv noted "that they believe there is a Christian cemetery, the one associated with St. Joachim's, and a larger Aboriginal burial ground under the EPCOR plant (RFAOHP

2004:46). However, the boundaries of the official commemorative area were already set and they would not be adjusted.

An optimist would answer that while maybe nothing has changed yet, you cannot discount the potential impact the report may have in the future. I fall somewhere in the middle. My idea of what constitutes "the point" of the project has changed. Having been affiliated with the City, yet also set apart from the City, the RFAOHP was able to develop its own strength and purpose. It allowed the voices of descendants to be heard, many for the first time. For many descendants, the RFAOHP marked the first time many of them had ever been asked for their thoughts or their knowledge regarding the site. It was the first time that the descendant communities were given the recognition that they sought.

And so we return to where we started and the closure of that small portion of Rossdale Road in the summer of 2004. In 2005, the year of Alberta's centennial, the repatriation and reburial of those removed from the site finally took place on the Rossdale Flats. Perhaps one of those returned was the dear and greatest Chief Lapotack. Perhaps he is still there. Perhaps he is one of those who have been lost. What remains to happen from here is to be determined. What is likely is that those who have been actively involved will continue to be. It is hoped that no one will be removed from the site again and that the site will be recognized for what it is – an important piece of Edmonton's history that cannot continue to be ignored and neglected.

Chapter Four:
Bringing the Pieces Together

In my role as the Project Manager for the RFAOHP, I found myself in an unenviable position – although not a City of Edmonton employee, I was in fact a representative of the City, and in this role I often found myself in a precarious position. I did not support the position of the City yet I was powerless to stop them. Further, as a “mere” volunteer with an advisory committee (EAUAC), I did not have the authority to negotiate the contract with the contract team nor issue payment. I was asked to sign off on paperwork (invoices for instance) but this signature was in fact not required. The signature of the Assistant Project Manager, a fulltime City employee, took precedence and was the required signature. Yet however constrained my role was within City administration, EAUAC was considered by many Aboriginal people involved in the Rosedale conflict to be “City” led and directed and therefore ineffective (or maybe not cognizant of their concerns?). While the complexities of the role of EAUAC were discussed more fully earlier in this thesis, it is also (a very important) part of the discussion on insider-outsider relations.

Insider-Outsider Dichotomy

In 1981 a new anthropology book appeared on the shelves of university bookstores. *Anthropologists at home in North America: methods and issues in the study of one's own society* edited by Donald A. Messerschmidt is a collection of papers concerning the then-burgeoning trend of anthropologists, including graduate students, conducting fieldwork at home, within their own society. In the introduction, Messerschmidt outlines five reasons why anthropologists began to work at “home”:

funding, exclusion, competition, specialization and efficacy (see also Peirano 1998). Both Messerschmidt and Peirano (quoting from Lévi-Strauss among others) note that some of the newly independent nations in the 1950s and 1960s rejected anthropologists and, according to Messerschmidt, anthropologists "no longer have the protection of the colonial authorities to assist us" (1981:9). Peirano however notes that even though "anthropology at home" or among your own gained momentum, it was often still looked down upon and "was seen by many [anthropologists] as a difficult task and better entrusted to researchers who had gained experience elsewhere" (1998:106). Peirano raises an interesting notion – that research in your own society is more difficult than traveling to some other exotic place and studying the culture and peoples there.

In her article, "Studying Your Own", Seteney Shami discusses her fieldwork among the Circassians in Jordan. Shami rejects the notion that as an "insider" of this group she is allowed greater insight into the Circassians and their culture. In fact, Shami reflects that her "experience [pre-fieldwork] was limited to my own sector of society and that I knew little about the realities of different social groups and classes" (1988:118). This is in fact true of everyone, researcher or not. Many people assume that membership in a particular group or culture automatically creates familiarity with all, or even most, aspects of that culture – an idea that is largely naive and misleading. While she did note that working within one's own culture makes it "...less easy" (1988:118), Shami does not adequately discuss the difficulties that conducting fieldwork in one's own community can present.

The entire notion that there is an insider, someone who is privy to the inner workings of a community or organization, means that there is, by definition, an outsider.

But who has the authority or power to define who that is? It may be easy for a reader to assume that my status as a Métis automatically provided me with a guaranteed insider position; however, in many situations this was not the case. My membership in the Métis Nation of Alberta³⁰ does not guarantee that I will be accepted as Métis – the fact that I have a rather fair complexion may have something to do with that. However, my last name, Cunningham, is, around these parts anyway, a long-standing Métis patronym. Having this name or another recognized Métis name can allow you access to people, places or knowledge if you can answer the deceptively simple questions of “Where are you from?” or “Who is your grandfather?”

Métis kinship in the Edmonton area is reflected not only in the RFAOHP but also Elizabeth MacPherson's book, *The Sun Traveller: The Story of the Callihoo's in Alberta*³¹ as well as Dr. Anne Anderson's more reference style book *The First Métis...A New Nation*. These books are primarily the story of the first Métis families in the area with a particular strength on families of the St. Albert/Big Lake area; these families are very intertwined – the result of over two centuries of intermarriage. These kinship ties allow a person to be granted an automatic status as a Métis but it does not guarantee their acceptance. A person still needs to be respectful, follow protocol and behave in an appropriate manner or access will be curtailed if not removed entirely. Kinship can also become a burden in itself. Between families there are long-standing positive and

³⁰ The criteria for membership in the Métis Nation of Alberta as listed on their website and in their promotional material are as follows: “*Métis means a person who self-identifies as a Métis, is distinct from other aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, and is accepted by the Métis Nation.*” (<http://www.albertaMétis.com/MNA-Membership-Definition.aspx>). It is beyond the confines of this thesis to provide debate and provide a definition of Métis; when using the term Métis within this paper, it will be this definition that I am referring to.

³¹ Some scholars debate the importance of MacPherson's book on the grounds that it is not a thorough academic text. It is not meant to be. MacPherson's book is, as the title suggests, the story of the Callihoo family, descendants of two Iroquois brothers who came west with the fur trade. Material is cited and sourced with a bibliography.

negative relationships that affect the way a member of one family is accepted by members of another family. Additionally, within families there are roles and hierarchies that must be followed, obeyed and adhered to. The disruption of family patterns that can be caused by conducting research in your own community is a potential problem that cannot be ignored.

At many times throughout the course of the RFAOHP and into the official commemorative process I felt extremely uncomfortable with the research I was undertaking. Over the three years I was intensively involved in the project I found myself on more than one occasion questioning whether or not I was capable of completing the work that some of the Elders had asked me to take on. It was not that I felt that I could not review the historical material or manage the project. The discomfort I felt during this research project had more to do with achieving a balance between the expectations of the descendant communities I worked with and the notion of myself as a graduate student in Anthropology, a discipline that historically has had a difficult relationship with Aboriginal people.

As a member of the descendant community I found it extremely difficult at times (and admittedly still do) to understand the rationale that City administration had or the disrespect that was shown by some city employees. To me, we were never discussing the fate of a random pile of bones – we were discussing the fate of the bones that once comprised the body of my Auntie Kathleen's grandfather William Rowland or the young child of Patrick Hughes and Nancy Small. In a culture where kinship plays such a vital role it is not uncommon for people to be able to name their great-grandparents and beyond. The names and the people behind the bones matter. Their names and stories

connect them to the present. As we saw earlier Maurice Halbwachs wrote "... it is because nothing remains of the group in which they passed their lives, and which needed to name them, that their names slowly become obliterated" (1992:73). The names of many of the people buried on the Rossdale Flats have been lost to written history but their story remains.

For many years the fact that I was Métis did not play a huge role in my life. I knew that I was, I knew that I had a large family and that I was related to a lot of the people that I was surrounded by. Cousins are cousins as the saying goes. I learned that some cousins are cousins you can marry and some cousins are cousins that you can't. Years later in a kinship class during my undergraduate degree I would learn (and later forget) the anthropological term for that type of cousin – I do remember that you can't marry a cousin with the same last name regardless of their distant relationship to you. Yet my Métis status was not an overwhelming presence in my life. It was who I am, who my father was and my grandfather was before him but it did not enter into my daily reality. I was aware of my Métis-ness (if there is such a word), asserted my identity when it was necessary but it was not the primary method of introduction. Working on this project changed that. I had personally been aware of the burials on the Rossdale Flats for longer than I can remember - I knew that I was related to people who are buried there, descended from some of them even. My grandfather had mentioned that his great-grandfather (William Rowland) was probably buried there but that no one was probably sure. It didn't really factor into my life except in ways that provided amusement or perhaps more accurately annoyance when I, like other members, of my family refused to drive over that portion of Rossdale Road. We would venture blocks out of the way so

we would not have to drive over the graves. We tracked the progress on the site (or lack of it) through the newspapers like other concerned citizens but it didn't overwhelm our lives. Although my family had originally used the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground as a family cemetery, they later used the Lac Ste. Anne Mission cemetery and later the St. Albert Catholic Mission cemetery. The history of their burials is the history of the Catholic retreat from the cemetery on the Rosedale Flats.

I found over the course of the project and the research that my Métis-ness became a tremendous factor affecting the work that I was doing. I became a part of the "us" vs. "them", but depending on the day and the tasks involved I was never sure which I was, an "us" or a "them". As already discussed, the association of EAUAC with City administration played a factor in that; so too did my status as a graduate student in anthropology. John L. Aguilar in "Insider research: an ethnography of a debate" writes that

insider status sometimes involves serious constraints...for those insiders who have *undergone considerable acculturation*, there is often a need to engage in an inordinate amount of stressful impression management. This is especially so during periods when their minority group is in a state of enmity vis a vis the larger society (1981:21; emphasis mine).

As a graduate student in Anthropology, I have undergone "considerable acculturation" to use Aguilar's words. I have achieved and am in the process of achieving a level of education unattained by most Aboriginal people in Canada. In many ways I have not accepted the prescribed gender roles of a Métis female; many Métis women my age are closer to being grandmothers than students. I have in many ways become one of the "others". As part of the Métis community of the Edmonton area I have roles and responsibilities that, at times, placed me in conflict with the roles and responsibilities I

had to assume as Project Manager. Elders tell you their stories as they get to know you over a long period of time. The six months the contract team had to work on the project did not leave enough time for people to always feel comfortable sharing their stories. Some stories should also only be told at certain times of the year, there are seasonal restrictions on some stories. The project took place over late summer, fall and into part of the winter (it wrapped up shortly after the winter solstice).

However, it was more than that. I found that as the project progressed I became more aware of my Métis status; it became a larger part of my life. I was reconnecting with people who had stories to share about my grandfather and his parents before him. I heard stories of old ways that have since been lost in our hectic lives – of weddings that lasted for days, of the time when the dowry for a Chastellain daughter was brought into the church (3 calves and a donkey along with a dozen or so cattle) and of the funerals where the entire mission would stop their work and their chores to pay their respects. I learned how grave locations were chosen in the old cemeteries where records no longer exist, if they were ever kept. I was told of the time when an old L'Hirondelle (male or female the Elder couldn't remember) was buried on the hill³² and as the gravediggers were widening the grave part of a leg bone from an older unmarked grave tumbled down into the hole. The story I was told ended with the bone being placed in the grave with L'Hirondelle after it had been blessed by a priest.

At the same time this project was going on the Métis Nation of Alberta changed their membership criteria. This revised definition requires members of the MNA to re-apply for membership utilizing a multi-generation chart which is used to verify the

³² Refers to the old St. Albert Catholic Cemetery located on Mission Hill (off St. Vital Avenue) in St. Albert.

applicant's Métis ancestry. The research involved in creating the chart is intensive – in addition to names going back five to seven generations you must also provide birthdates, death dates, baptismal information, marriage information, etc. The names that I was encountering, many of whom I already knew, but others were new, were the names of the people interred in the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground. Behind the names were the stories of lives lived, babies and children lost, wives buried while their husbands were away.

One day as I sat in the reading room at the City of Edmonton Archives (CEA) perusing the Burial File as it is called, I came across a newspaper clipping from 1976. The clipping from the Edmonton Journal was titled "Old Fort Edmonton graveyard uncovered: historians to study remains" (Inwood 1976). The article is accompanied by a photo of a skull sitting on a concrete block; a site worker leans over for a closer look (the photograph is reproduced in Appendix B). A friend of mine was sitting at the next table and I guess I must have seemed uncomfortable or unnerved. I showed her the photo and it didn't seem to bother her. It was something about the skull and the look of incredulity on the utility worker's face. The names and stories that I had been told of the people buried in the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground came running back. I couldn't help but wonder which name and what story belonged to that skull. More articles and their photos followed that one. That was followed by archaeology reports, osteology reports, and reports on cable line installations. The majority of the reports are written in the detached voice of people who don't have a connection to the site beyond their possession. It was unsettling – the idea that the skull could have belonged to William Rowland or Thomas Hodgson or for that matter Louise Umphreville or the

woman who belonged to a half-breed – people were so nonchalant. Does it matter how they died or how hard the work of the fur trade was on their bones? It is a given that hard work will show on your bones – ask anyone who has ever worked as a labourer on a farm or in the oil patch. The study of the bones is not necessary.

Days after that experience at the CEA I was sitting in an anthropology class. The article under discussion that day was on the Métis, their origins and hybridity. During the class break one of the students in the class likened the Métis to orchids. It turns out someone she knew was very involved in the pollination and production of orchids and hybrids tend to make the best orchids. The conversation from there is remarkable for only one reason – how that student and the others who agreed had no idea what they were really talking about. They knew the theory, yes, but they did not have the knowledge of Métis culture, history and society on which to base their assertions. There is nothing more surreal than sitting in a classroom around what can best be described as a boardroom table with people telling you who you are and how you came to be. Where is the reverse pronunciation of who they are and how they came to be? That classroom conversation was years ago. I no longer remember how the class ended or where the conversation went after the part about the orchid. It is this “othering,” creating the exotic that makes people wary of dealing with anthropologists. The descendant community I worked with had, as their primary experience with anthropologists, dealt with the archaeologists and physical anthropologists that had excavated the site and studied the bones of their ancestors. They were not used to dealing with a cultural anthropologist or someone willing to listen to them. It took time, patience and understanding on both sides.

My experience in both the classroom and on the project made me question on more than one occasion whether or not anthropology was the place for me to be. It is something I still question. I am comfortable in the "field" working with the descendant communities and I am comfortable in the archives completing the historical research that is needed – in that way I can prove to be useful to the descendant community I am part of, and also to others. I am more comfortable with being part of the anthropological field now that I have acquired some distance between the research project and myself. Not being immersed in the quagmire of the project for a few months has allowed time for reflection on the work that was accomplished and the work that remains.

The Rossdale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project as Commemoration

As has previously been discussed, the submission of the RFAOHP did not result in any substantive changes to the demarcated boundary of the site that had been pre-determined by the City of Edmonton. In fact, when the commemorative ceremony and reburial took place in August 2005, neither myself as Project Manager nor members of the contract team were officially invited to the ceremony although those with other more officially recognized connections (for example, all members of the University of Alberta's Repatriation Committee were invited) were. When I received notice of the event from a colleague at the university I contacted the City of Edmonton to ensure that descendants who we had interviewed were invited to attend. In most cases, they hadn't been unless they also attended the public meetings which were often held without a lot of notice (I often received less than a week's notice of meeting times). When questioned about this omission, the person I spoke with at the City declared that they had simply

forgotten to invite them but that the situation would be rectified and the participants invited.

Earlier we learned that commemoration is by nature communal (Casey 2000; Gillis 1991), it is the formal aspect of social memory and it requires the participation and recognition of the group that a commemorative activity is occurring for an act to be considered commemoration. However, the form that commemoration takes is not specified. It involves a group of people who recognize they are working towards a specific goal – the commemoration or public remembrance of an event, place, or particular historical event. It can be deduced that the RFAOHP itself, regardless of whether or not the report and its findings were accepted by the City of Edmonton as having validity and regardless of whether or not the report influenced the boundaries of the official commemorative site, is an act of commemoration. The RFAOHP was communal by nature; members of descendant communities, biological or emotional, were included. Public meetings and informal gatherings were held to inform the descendants of progress. The goal of the project itself was to collect and transcribe the oral histories of the Rosedale Flats area.

Jan Vansina notes, "oral traditions are documents of the present, because they are told in the present. Yet they also embody a message from the past, so they are at the same time expressions of the past. *They are the representation of the past in the present*" (1985:xii; emphasis added). Could the work of an oral historian be considered a commemorative activity? If we use Vansina's definition of oral history we can see that the past is brought forward for use in the present generation(s). It involves the recognition of the past and acknowledges its importance to the present.

In his book *How Societies Remember* Paul Connerton states "in the practice of oral history [we have] the possibility of rescuing from silence the history and culture of subordinate groups. Oral histories seek to give voice to what would otherwise remain voiceless even if not traceless, by reconstituting the life histories of individuals" (1989:18). That is what the RFAOHP did accomplish. Through the recording, transcribing and accession of twenty-seven interviews the contract team and EAUAC were able to make the stories and the information they contained, including a wealth of genealogical information, available to present and future researchers and individuals with an interest in the history of the Edmonton area. The interviews themselves were for some interviewees the first time that someone had taken the time to ask them what they knew about the site and the burials it contains.

The Rossdale oral histories project was completed in March 2004. My involvement with the Rossdale site continued past that to include partaking in some, but not all, meetings on the commemoration project, and I continued to give Elders a chance to speak to me about the site and their knowledge. Even now that reburial has taken place, the site has continued importance. Descendants and activists are continuing to search the historical records to determine the names of more people who may be buried there and to ask the City of Edmonton to expand the boundaries of the commemoration site. During the course of this research project and its affiliate, the Rossdale Historical Land Use Study, the research played a role in re-connecting the descendant communities to their history. As part of the project, interviewees were asked about their genealogy and their memories not only of the site itself but memories of early Edmonton. We provided them with copies of early maps of the area and through our opening and

closing gatherings allowed the descendants an opportunity to connect with each other and form an on-going relationship. For some descendants, the research projects allowed them to complete the missing pieces of their genealogy or discuss with someone why their family moved back to Edmonton after being gone for almost eighty years.

Psychologist Nico Frijda writes "the impact of major emotional events does not diminish with the course of time. Time does not heal wounds; it only softens scars" (1997:105). The major emotional event here – the continued disturbance of the burials on the flats – has passed. It is acknowledged by the descendant communities, activists, the City, EPCOR and ACD that the continued use of the site as a power plant and a thriving residential neighbourhood means that from time to time more burials may be disturbed. All parties involved have provided assurances that this risk will be minimized and if exposure does take place, the bones will be dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate manner. The question of whether or not scientific use will be allowed on any bones that are exposed is unresolved.

Frijda is right – time doesn't heal wounds. The wounds that have been incurred in the fight over the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground are many but they are beginning to heal. The first step in this healing was the repatriation and reburial that took place in August 2005. There are more wounds to heal; wounds that require action and forgiveness. It is hoped this will happen. Things happen in small steps and small steps forward are still steps forward.

*Epilogue:**The New Starting Point*

Anthropologist Paula Pryce writes

the act of reburial re-establishes the appropriate relationship with the ancestors, with the land in which they are buried, with their continuous identity in space and time. To put ancestral remains back into the earth where they belong is like planting a seed: it is like planting an ideal society, one in which they can assert their ethnicity, their idea of justice and a life of spiritual, political, and economic morality (1999:11)

Reburial and repatriation quite literally means to bring someone home; to return someone to where they belong. The story of the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground is the story of commemoration. It is the story of a descendant community that persevered and fought for the right to be heard and have their concerns recognized and addressed. The three Rossdale projects (the historical land use study, the oral histories project and the commemoration project) culminated in a reburial ceremony that took place in late summer 2005.

The Reburial

On August 28, 2005 approximately 300 people converged on a cordoned off section of Rossdale Road – there were seats for about 150 people and the rest stood, sat on the curb or on the grass and fanned themselves looking for a way to cool off in the sweltering heat. The temperature that day reached almost 30⁰ Celsius and the heat seemed to radiate off the pavement in waves. Pre-ceremony conversation centred on the heat; children ran back and forth to the refreshment tent for bottles of water and passed them around to Elders and youngsters alike. People sought refuge in the little shade that was provided by the few trees that remain in the area.

The initial gathering area had not only the city-provided refreshment tent but also a large tipi that had been erected by descendants and activists involved in the struggle that had taken place over the last five years.

At the gathering site young children (and more than a few adults) could be seen petting the horses that were brought in to pull the wagons that would be used to transport Elders and those requiring assistance to the reburial site located a few hundred metres away. At a little after 2:30 pm the sound of a muffled bagpipe could be heard. It was faint at first and as it gathered strength and power the realization that this day was finally here, almost one hundred years after the first known

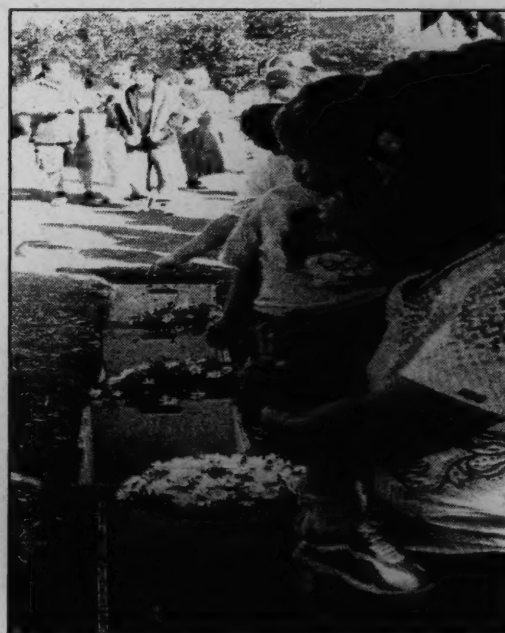


Figure 9. Graveside service. August 28, 2005.

disturbance and removal and four years after it was first promised, began to become clear on the faces of the people there – the chatter waned and in an instant solemnity took over.

The piper led the way to the first stop on the procession route. An inter-denominational ceremony was held outside the west gate of the EPCOR power plant on Rossdale Road. A drumming group, a fiddler, and singers partook in the ceremony. Officiants including Elders Mike Rain, Louie Rain, Jerry Wood and George Good Striker Sr.; Reverend Dr. John Henry Weinlick (United Church), Very Reverend Greg Kerr-Wilson (Anglican Church), Father Jim Holland and Father Andre Vincelette

(Roman Catholic Church), and Reverend Chris Roulson the City of Edmonton Chaplain, offered prayers in English, French and Cree. People pushing strollers and some of the many runners who regularly utilize the many river valley paths came walking or jogging by unsure of what was going on. Some stopped to listen; others kept running and one even ran in front of the stage while the fiddler played her lament.

After the short ceremony, the procession continued to the burial site that had been selected in consultation with archaeologists from ACD in order to reduce the risk of further disturbing existing graves. Here, in a small grassy area surrounded by construction fencing that contained a few trees, the remains of an eight people removed from what was supposed to be their final resting place, were re-interred after graveside prayers concluded. The eight caskets were made of pine using wood joints and within the caskets cotton blankets and a bedding of buffalo fur was used to provide cushioning. Grave goods that had previously been removed from the site were re-interred along with the remains. After the prayers those attending were invited to sprinkle earth onto the caskets. Many people placed flowers in the graves as well.



Figure 10. Location of crosses still located on contested burial site. Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Grounds reburial ceremony. August 28, 2005.

A small number of those attending walked back to the initial gathering area where a traditional feast was held. A few speeches – city and provincial officials as well as descendants and activists paid respect to the work that had taken place.

Three hours after the temporary road barricades went up traffic on Rossdale Road returned to normal. The joggers regained their cement path unobstructed, the cars sped by and the fence gate to the site was locked behind the last person to leave.

As we left, the friend I was with asked me what the crosses and staff in a different parcel of land were for. The land, located just to the northeast of where we had just witnessed the re-interment is under dispute as many descendants believe the cemetery and burial ground extends in that direction. To mark the site they have placed crosses and spears in order to let people know that the sacred continues to hold its sacredness. The land is still in conflict; there was no resolution but there was resolve. There was the need, at this time, to take what was offered – the piece of land that was given and the reburial of some of those individuals was not resolution but resolve to do the best that can be done now with what is available now.

If we return to Blum's typology of replacement, upgrading and displacement, it has come full circle. The reburial on the Rossdale Flats is a replacement of what was displaced. It is the reclamation of land held sacred by members of the descendant communities. It is the reclamation of knowledge and memory of the people buried in the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground.

Edmonton poet Lorie Miseck writes "There is no resolution. Only resolve. Words holding themselves against the page as though it were a mirror...resolve, the last chord of a song that takes dissonance to consonance" (2002:142). It is resolve on the part of the

descendant communities that enabled the repatriation and reburial to take place. It is resolve on the part of the descendant communities that made both the City of Edmonton and EPCOR take notice and commit to action and examine their histories.

Sometime during the summer or fall of 2006, the official physical commemorative action will take place. The landscaping will be complete and a memorial structure will be erected. Yet, for many descendants, the landscaping and memorial are minor compared to what has already been achieved – the reburial ceremony in August of 2005. The physical act of placing our ancestors back into the ground from which they were taken was the culmination of 97 years of disturbances and removals; 97 years of being physically displaced from their family and ancestral burial grounds. It was a return to where they belonged.

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2001 Letter to His Worship Mayor Bill Smith. August 24, 2001. A copy of this letter can be found in Appendix 1 – Letter from Alberta Community Development in the 2004 *Rosssdale Historical Land Use Study* report by Commonwealth Historic Resources Management. Pages 212-213.

Appendix A:

Abridged Timeline of the

Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground

Date	Event
March 27, 1814	First recorded burial at Edmonton House II on the Rossdale Flats
1819-20	Measles epidemic
February 12, 1823	Ritchotte's boy buried on the Flats
1852	Father Lacombe arrives at Fort Edmonton
1861	Mission is established at St. Albert; First recorded burial at St. Albert
April 12, 1864	First recorded instance of bodies being taken to St. Albert for burial
August 25, 1871	Last recorded burial at the HBC Fort Cemetery on the Rossdale Flats
September 3, 1871	First recorded burial at Methodist Mission Cemetery (under the parking lot of present-day Alberta College)
1872	Catholic Church forced to leave Fort – re-opens at Drunken Lake (no longer exists but is near 124 Street and 112 Avenue)
1882	The "Burial Ground" appears on the HBC Reserve Survey map
August 15, 1882	Opening of Livingstone's Cemetery (either in McKinnon Ravine or on Summit Drive near the Provincial Museum)
1886	Edmonton Cemetery opens
1906	Fort Edmonton closed
1908	First disturbance of remains (installation of a railway spur to haul coal; one infant possibly re-interred in the Unmarked Cemetery on Enoch Reserve)
1916	Fort buildings torn down
1930	Location of Burial Ground shows on City of Edmonton Engineer's Map and Report just before the construction of Rossdale Road
May 17, 1930	Construction of Rossdale Road over a large portion of the HBC Fort Cemetery
May 10, 1943	Disturbance (power plant expansion; 1 adult, 4 children present whereabouts unknown)
September 4, 1957	Disturbance (water line installation; 2 adult males, 2 adult females)
1966	Bones from the Methodist Mission Cemetery discovered during building excavations
Fall 1966	Disturbance (trenching; 1 Aboriginal male)
1966-67	Disturbance (Northwestern Utilities gas line; 1 infant, 1 woman and 3 men; remains in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alberta)

Date	Event
1973	Disturbance (cable installation; 1 woman)
1976	Disturbance (telephone cable installed; 5 people found in coffins re-interred at Beechmount Cemetery)
1981	Disturbance (installation of a voltage line; 2 individuals, 1 left on site, the second removed and present whereabouts unknown)
Late 1990s	Increased demand from Aboriginal groups for their concerns to be heard
2000	Archaeological survey finds evidence of palisade wall of old fort
2001	Archaeological survey undertaken to locate the perimeter of the cemetery
2002	Historical Land Use Study is undertaken (expected date of completion is April 2003)
2002	Rossdale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project is undertaken – expected date of completion is November 2003
2003	Repatriation of human remains from Rossdale Flats HBC Fort Cemetery begins – expected completion is early 2004
February 2004	Rossdale Flats Aboriginal Oral Histories Project is released
Spring 2004	Historical Land Use Study is released
National Aboriginal Day 2004	Expected date for re-interment of individuals in the Fort Cemetery. Includes at least a partial closure of Rossdale Road
August 28, 2005	Reburial takes place at the Fort Edmonton Cemetery/Aboriginal Burial Ground

Note:

This table includes only three notations of internments at the Hudson's Bay Company Fort Cemetery. A listing of all historically documented internments is available in the report entitled: *Fort Edmonton Burial Ground: An Archaeological and Historical Study* by Saxberg, Nancy; Bourges, Claire; Haddow, Scott; and Reeves, Brian. Calgary: Lifeways of Canada Limited. 2003. It is important to note that while the Lifeways report lists 91 individuals it is estimated that up to 200 people may be interred in the Rossdale Flats.

Information for this table comes from the above document, the Fort Edmonton Journals available from the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, the Forts des Prairies burial register (available at the PAA), and the Edmonton Journal.

Appendix B:

The 1976 Disturbance



Figure 11. Photograph from the Edmonton Journal. November 16, 1976. Article by Damian Inwood.